

Flash Back

Kashmir Story

Since 1846



Zahir-ud-Din

اے باد صبا گر جنیوا گزر کنی
ہر فز مابہ مجلس اقوام باز گوئی
دہقان و کشت و جوئے و حیا بان فروختند
قوے فروختند و چہ ارزان فروختند

*O! The morning breeze, were ye to cross over Geneva;
Take it from the grieved ones to the 'League of Nations;
The cultivations, the streams, the avenues were sliced
A nation was wholly sold and how cheap was it priced?*



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Foreward

Truth is the first casualty of war and war has been a recurring feature of Kashmir's modern history. Thus history, for that matter any liberal science, that attempts to critically examine and analyse contemporary issues or looks at historical antecedent of contemporary events in Jammu and Kashmir, suffers from curtailment of academic freedom. Anything that questions or presents the Indian State other than in officially sanctioned garb faces marginalization. There are issues which are considered virtually taboo such as anyone who examines the critically the circumstances behind the signing of Instrument of Accession by Hari Singh, the last Dogra Ruler, or how to analyse and understand the significance of Poonch uprising that preceded the entry of tribals into Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 or the complex nature of National Conference and Muslim Conference contention or for that matter role of Indian State in promotion of communalismThe sanitized version of post 1947 history representing the officially sanctioned Indian position is sanctified. Villains and heroes become fixed categories, let alone sharp differences even grey areas or nuanced version of events meets with disapproval. Events and incidents are read with an priori notion of what is considered the 'correct' version.

As a result history writing which is a terrain of contention and controversy, and where disagreements, differences and diversity are meant to be encouraged for intellectual clarity, lags behind in J&K. In such circumstances much of the intellectual churning, including research and writings, takes place outside the academia. It can not be disputed that history

becomes a terrain of inquiry during prolonged crisis. Just as officialdom attempts to curb revisionist history resistance seeks to circumvent this through concerted efforts outside the institutional framework of local university. For sure not all that gets written or documented is necessarily rigorously researched. But there are few that stand out.

Zahir -ud- Din is of course a dear friend and a person I respect for his integrity and commitment. But he is also one of those rare personalities who has an encyclopedic grasp of Kashmir's contemporary history and he puts his memory to good use. He is a chronicler of his times. Flashback is a chronicle made up of a collection of short essays, some of it are his weekly columns, on a variety of issues where oral history, anecdotes, official records, biographies are used as a source to bring out another view or another account of some event in the past or history behind current event influenced by developments in the past. So in considering what factors in compelling Sheikh Abdullah to support Beg-Parthasarthy Accord in 1975 which paved the way for his return to governmental power. Apart from other things he draws attention to arm twisting by Indian authorities by threatening to confiscate Nedous Hotel. How much that played a role and how much role was the defeat of Pakistan in 1971 war and emergence of Bangladesh could be a subject matter of debate. But in Kashmir use of corruption case to bring people to fall in line can not be denied. So long as a corrupt leader plays according to the rules laid down by New Delhi everything is fine but no sooner they deviate or try to chalk out an autonomous line vicious campaign against them can ensue. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed realized that much to his consternation. More importantly, it can encourage someone to look at contemporary records to flesh out the events of 1971-75. Someone may even want to further probe whether the accord lived up to its projected image of having resolved the Kashmir dispute or rather laid the foundation for

a more resounding denouement?

So the chronicler provides the 'bricks' or facts or reading of events, the building blocks, for anyone willing to probe further. They are a source for those engaged in history writing, something Zahir himself is engaged in. Sometimes he is his own chronicler recording events which he himself witnessed; it could be 1983 India- West Indies Match or Gowkadal massacre of January 1990....At other places he corrects misrepresentation of historical events through his own research and reading or interview that he did with a person who was witness to those events.

But the book is interesting for other reasons too. Zahir is one of the few who are not afraid to go against the wind, so to say. For instance he raises and frontally confronts the issue about what would have been the impact of Muslim United Front winning the election in 1987 and what would have they done? Precious little according to Zahir and recalls how Jamaat-e-Islami too had told people in 1970s that they would move resolution of rejecting Accession to India. And points out that JeI leaders could barely raise any issue because each time for instance Syed Ali Shah Geelani got up to speak the National Conference legislators would make such noise that his voice would get drowned in the cacophony. Thus Zahir writes that MUF fed 'fairy tales' to the people that they would bring a resolution nullifying accession to India. Reading between the lines readers can grasp its contemporary significance there are many who argue for participating in elections to take the issue to the floor of the state Legislative Assembly.

In another essay Zahir captures the dilemma of a renegade, Javed Shah, who became a MLC. Zahir writes that Javed once told Firdous Baba @Babar Badar that his son once came to him and told him that he would like to change his father's name because his friends tell him that his father Javed

Sheikh Abdullah Accord) was inked on 24th February 1975. And Afzal Guru was hanged on February 9, 2013. But then he draws attention to another February murder when Ghulam Mohammed Bulla was arrested and killed in custody on February 15, 1975. His crime for protesting the sell-out by Sheikh Abdullah and was accused of waiving a Pakistani flag. He was beaten to death.

If the foregoing titillates one to read the book so much the better, because the book is easy to read and narrative straight forward. His prose is lucid and devoid of shrillness. Scholars might agree or disagree with Zahir, they may find some of the things he says controversial or politically incorrect. But the value of his chronicle remains intact. Most of the readers, I believe, will find it useful, some encouraged to pursue research, and others to ponder over what he says. They will not be disappointed. It will be a rewarding experience.

Gautam Navlakha

New Delhi

21st March 2013.

Preface

Kashmir history has been distorted beyond repair and loss of valuable information means that many a mystery could never be unveiled. The need for a peoples' version of the history was strongly felt during a meeting of Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) in 2008, a year after my book *Bouquet-A tribute to unsung heroes of Kashmir* hit the stands.

The JKCCS president, Parvez Imroz and coordinator, Khurram Parvez entrusted the job to me. I had collected enough material including some unpublished autobiographies of political activists during my research for the above book. I immediately started work on the project.

However, friends urged me to publish the footnotes of the book (I am working on) in the form of stories for the youth especially for the students.

I started filing stories on Kashmir history for local dailies and received tremendous feedback. This helped me make the necessary corrections. *Flash Back* is a compilation of those stories.

Some important stories have been withheld for various reasons. Similarly some names have been withheld for security reasons.

The stories about Plebiscite Front have been left out. I intend to do the stories separately shortly.

I am thankful to Greater Kashmir, Kashmir Reader and Rising Kashmir for publishing the stories. Urdu translation of some of the stories was published by Daily Uqaab, Daily Alsafa News and Daily Udaan Jammu. I am thankful to all of them.

I am thankful to my colleagues Imtiaz Khan, Rameez Mushtaq,

Feroz Ahmad, Muhammad Ayoub, Masudul Hasan Kanth, Dr. Javaid Iqbal and Imtiaz Paul for their help. My colleagues in JKCCS office cooperated despite their engagements. I am thankful to them. My wife and children, Hamza and Hafsa showed keen interest in the book. I am thankful to them.

JKLF leader, Altaf Khan provided vital information on Maqbool Bhat. Shakeel Bakshi of Islamic Students League (ISL) made some corrections. I am thankful.

I request the readers to bear with me and inform me about the many mistakes I have committed.

Zahir-ud-Din
Srinagar
21 March 2013

Prologue

Self flogging has assumed alarming proportions in Kashmir. Everybody curses himself and the entire population. According to noted pediatrician and author Dr Altaf Husain, 400 years of suppression and oppression have taken peoples' thinking to this level. Whatever the reasons, this unfortunate trend is not going to serve any purpose. Kashmiris must know their glorious past to get rid of this fatalistic mentality. An in-depth study of Kashmir history depicts a different picture of Kashmiris. They have been brave, bold, charactered, cultured and good fighters.

Very often the couplet of an unknown Central Asian poet is cited to malign Kashmiris. The poet says: "*Agar Qahtul Rijaal Uftund A(z)e Shaan Unus Kumgeeri, Awal Kambo Doum Afghan Soum Budzaat Kashmiri.*" (If there is dearth of men in the world, never make friends with an Afghan, Kambo or Kashmiri even in such difficult times). Historians believe that Akbar's army recited this verse repeatedly while fighting Kashmiris. While Kashmiris do not need a character certificate from a colonizer and his army, the question as to why the poet resorted to their character assassination needs to be answered. In this verse the poet has prefixed an adjective to Kashmiris. Budzaat means a person who has no character, who changes colours like a chameleon and who resorts to cheating. Well, while it is not known what prompted the poet to use such derogatory word against Kashmiris, knowledgeable people strongly contest this. According to them, Kashmiris are great people. They have strong arguments to prove it.

Hearsay reports suggest that the **Kambos** (a tribe somewhere in Punjab) force their women into prostitution. Kashmiris on the other hand launched a strong movement against **prostitution** seven decades ago and forced the then government to ban it. A barber, Muhammad Subhan Hajam worked tirelessly and succeeded in persuading the government to ban prostitution. The detested practice would earn the then government 25% of its total revenue. A few years ago, the people came out and demanded stern action against the persons involved in the sex scandal.

After the end of **Talibaa**n rule in Afghanistan, long queues were seen outside the barber shops. Desperate people in a bid to get rid of the beard waited outside the saloons for hours together. When Bollywood announced its arrival in the conflict torn land, as many as six people died in a stampede outside a cinema hall. They were so desperate to see Madhuri Dixit dancing on the silver screen that they killed six people to make it to the hall.

Here an attempt has not been made to cast aspersions on the Kambo and Afghan races. There are black sheep in every community. But when compared to Kashmiris, a totally different story comes to surface. Yes, many Kashmiris also shaved off their beard under **compulsion**. In 1979, it was done to escape the wrath of the angry pro-Bhutto demonstrators and during the past two decades for 'security' reasons. Queues were never seen outside the barber shops in Kashmir. Similarly when the government reopened cinema halls in Srinagar, very few people visited them.

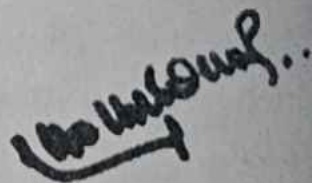
As they say first deserve then desire, the thinking has to change. The sacrifices offered by the people narrate the story of their resilience. Then, why self flogging? Tyndale Biscoe has admitted our greatness in the following words: 'Kashmir has been conquered and reconquered by invaders who have murdered, oppressed and enslaved their ancestors and so

ground the life and heart of them that their better selves have been crushed. It is quite possible that if we Britishers had to undergo what the Kashmiris have suffered in the past we might have lost our manhood.

Kashmiris have the distinction of resisting external aggression. They fought the Mughals and even defeated them. Their rule was never accepted. Similarly there was resistance (though subtle) against the Afghans and the Sikhs. Kashmiris fought Gulab Singh valiantly. He assumed the throne only when British came to help him. And, the heroic resistance since 1947 is unparalleled.

We know it is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness.

We are not going to take this sitting down. We are fighting back.
Let our glorious past be our inspiration.



Zahir-ud-Din
Srinagar

Afzal Guru

*Choo rahay thay qatiloona kay sar meray pairon kay saath
Isqadar ooncha tha main sooli pay chad janay kay baad*

[The head of my executioner touched my feet
I grew so tall on the gallows]

Some people become important after their death. Afzal Guru is one of them. He wanted to live but could not afford this "luxury" without compromising his dignity and integrity. Circumstances forced him to knock at the doors of the Special Operations Group (SOG) offices. But he walked to the gallows smilingly. He was calm and composed when the executioner put the noose around his neck. Guru died on February 9, 2013 but resurrected the sentiment. Thanks India for giving Kashmiris their own Bhagat Singh.

A dead Guru scared New Delhi to the extent that his body was "detained" in a corner of the jail where he spent precious years of his life. The entire Kashmir valley was placed under curfew for several days. Twelve persons laid down their lives across Kashmir to give company to Guru in Jannah.

The movement for return of his remains continues but the grave reserved for him in martyr's graveyard at Eidgah Srinagar may never hold him in its bosom. New Delhi cannot afford a "political shrine" in Kashmir.

The execution may have satisfied the "dead collective conscience" of the Indian nation but it has once again brought the fragility of the 1947 arrangement to the fore.

Hussain Guru and Afzal Guru, while Afsan Guru is let off.

August 30, 2003: Jaish-e-Muhammad leader Ghazi Baba, prime accused in the attack, is killed in an encounter with the Border Security Force (BSF) in Srinagar. Three more militants along with him are also killed in the 10-hour encounter.

October 29, 2003: Geelani acquitted in the case.

August 4, 2005: The Supreme Court, while confirming the death sentence of Afzal Guru, commutes Shaukat Hussain Guru's death sentence to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.

September 26, 2006: Delhi court orders Afzal Guru to be hanged.

October 3, 2006: Afzal Guru's wife Tabasum Guru files a mercy petition with then President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

January 12, 2007: The Supreme Court 'dismisses Afzal Gurus plea seeking review of his death sentence, saying "there is no merit" in it.

May 19, 2010: Delhi government rejects Afzal Guru's mercy petition; endorses capital punishment awarded to him by the Supreme Court.

December 30, 2010: Shaukat Hussain Guru released from Tihar Jail.

December 10, 2012: Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde says he would examine Afzal Guru's file after Parliament's Winter session concludes on December 22.

February 3, 2013: President Pranab Mukherjee rejects Afzal Guru's mercy petition

February 9, 2013: Afzal Guru hanged in Tihar Jail.

Why was Guru hanged?

People say he was not involved in the Parliament attack. Others say he did not receive a fair trial. There are some who believe he was hanged to ensure Congress party's victory return to power in forthcoming Parliamentary elections. However, the answer lies in history.

Turn the pages to find the answer.

Shaheed Gunj martyrs

In 1996, I wrote a piece on Robert Thorp titled "First Martyr" in *Greater Kashmir*. Robert Thorp was a Britisher who visited Kashmir in early Dogra rule and wrote a book, *Kashmir Misgovernment* highlighting Dogra repression. On November 22, 1868 he was found dead.

Several years later, when the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) constituted the Robert Thorp award, noted columnist Dr. Sheikh Showkat Hussain contested my write up. According to him, Robert Thorp was not the first martyr. He gave a brief account of events that followed the 1846 Sale Deed. I was convinced and my quest for locating the graves of Shaheed Gunj martyrs commenced.

During my search, I talked to a number of elderly persons but could not locate the graveyard. Shaheed Gunj was then called Maidanpora. Meanwhile, Dr. Showkat wrote an article on the July 13 martyrs. He also made a mention of the Shaheed Gunj martyrs. It was very helpful.

Contrary to common belief, the Kashmiris fought the army of Gulab Singh under the dynamic leadership of Imam-ud-Din the last Governor of Sikh rule. A fierce battle was fought near Sheikh Bagh and Gulab Singh was defeated. For several months, Gulab Singh was made to eat a humble pie by the brave Kashmiris. Finally Imam-ud-Din had to give in following British intervention. The people who got killed during the resistance were laid to rest at Shaheed Gunj. However, unfortunately there is no trace of the grave yard today.

It is believed that Gulab Singh was highly enraged by the resistance offered by Kashmiris. Finally when he assumed the throne, he had a naked sword in his hand. Some people say he waved it and said this would now decide the fate of Kashmiris. What followed reflects his ruthlessness. The defeat had hit hard at his arrogance.

May 1 or April 29?

On May 1, people across the globe commemorate the sacrifices offered by laborers at Chicago. On May 1, 1886 laborers took out a procession to press their demands. One laborer was killed when police opened fire at the demonstrators. On the following day (May 2) a protest demonstration was staged at Hay Market Square by the laborers. A bomb was hurled at the police men. Seven of them died on the spot and around 70 sustained injuries. In retaliatory action a few laborers also got killed. Since then May 1 is observed every year across the globe.

While the world commemorates the sacrifices of Chicago workers, nobody makes a mention of the Kashmiri shawl weavers who resisted the Dogra onslaught tooth and nail. On July 6, 1847 around 4000 shawl weavers observed strike against exploitation by the Dogra rulers. This is the first strike observed by workmen anywhere in the world. Soon after, thousands of weavers migrated to Lahore via Shopian. A British officer, Lt. Reynell Taylor rushed to Shopian and persuaded the weavers to refrain from migrating to Lahore. Some grievances were taken note of.

In 1856, Ranbir Singh ascended the throne. Gulab Singh suffered an attack of Dropsy which ultimately killed him in 1859. Ranbir Singh strictly followed his father and imposed severe tax on the shawl weavers. Raw material, import of wool from Ladakah was also taxed. Besides custom duty, tax was also imposed on the finished products. According to some historians around 300% tax was imposed on the shawls which

broke the back of the shawl industry. At that time around 1,25,000 persons were involved in the shawl industry. These included weavers, washer men, skilled laborers having know how of printing. The industry generated more than Rs. 50 lakhs annually. In 1865 shawls worth 2, 54,000 British Pounds were exported from Kashmir. However, the weavers got peanuts. Most of them made around Rs. 5 to 7 every month that too after working 16-18 hours a day. They had to pay tax to the tune of Rs. 5 monthly. They could not change their profession or stop working. Heavy fine was imposed on the weavers who had unsuccessfully migrated to Lahore. Some of them were jailed. It is worth mentioning here that Afghan Governor, Haji Karimdad Khan had imposed the tax and it was then called Dag Shawl.

Meanwhile, a Pandit, Raj Kak Dhar got the contract of the shawl department for Rs. 12 lakh. He set up his office at Saraf Kadal (ZainaKadal) and imposed tax to the tune of Rs. 49 on the shawl weavers. Dhar was patronized by the Government and would take the army along to recover tax. The weavers approached the then Governor Kripa Ram to apprise him of their woes but he did not listen to them. To press their demands the weavers took out a procession on April 29, 1865. The processionists staged a demonstration in a ground near Zaldagar and later decided to march towards the residence of the Governor. Meanwhile, Raj Dhar managed to instigate the Governor who sent Colonel Beach Singh to take care of the protestors. The army herded the protesters towards Haji Rather Sum (a small bridge on Kut-e-Kul.) The bridge collapsed. Around 28 people drowned. Many sustained injuries. According to Dr. Altaf Husaïn the author of *Wounded Paradise*, the Dogra soldiers also opened fire on the protesters. Notwithstanding brutal repression, the people fished out all the bodies from the river and planned to take the bodies to Ranbir Singh's palace next morning. However, they could not

march towards the palace as the army intercepted them. The leaders were taken into custody. **Sheikh Rasool** and **Abli Baba** were tortured to death in a dungeon in Shergarhi palace. Some of them were severely fined.

On May 1 some prisoners including Ali Paul, Rasool Sheikh, Quda Lala and Sona Shah were sent to Jammu. Ali Paul and Rasool Sheikh died of tuberculosis in Ram Nagar Jail. Quda Lala and Sona Shah met the same fate. Nobody knows how the first martyrs of the Trade Union Movement were treated. No charge sheet was produced in any court. No enquiry was constituted. The inaction of the government only encouraged the army and the bureaucracy. Kashmiris continued to suffer. The local trade union leaders cannot escape responsibility of not setting the historical records right. Most of them do not even know that a major incident took place at Zaldagar on April 29, 1865. They take out processions and hold debates and seminars on May 1 but have miserably failed to tell the world how, when and where the first organized strike of the workers was observed.

They can rectify the wrong by taking measures now. A memorial must come up at the site of the massacre at Zaldagar. This is the least they can do. Let them start the noble job this year by holding a seminar on the Zaldagar martyrs. The great martyrs have been ignored by the Government as well. Surprisingly, government assigns more importance to the struggle against Dogras from 1931. This is the time when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appeared on the political firmament of Kashmir. The struggle of the shawl weavers and great trade unionist G.N. Gilkar finds no mention anywhere. April 29 is also important for the human rights defenders. This is the day when the phenomenon of extra-judicial executions started in Kashmir. Can they ignore it?

Forgotten martyr

Early in the morning on November 22, 1868, a body was recovered from Srinagar. The deceased was later identified as Robert Thorp. Poisoning, the people believed was the cause of death. Thorp was laid to rest at Sheikh Bagh Christian graveyard. It took the locals some time to realize that with the death of Thorp, a strong voice had fallen silent. Kashmiris lost their savior. The epitaph reads: "*Obit- Robert Thorp- Veritas- He gave his life for Kashmir.*"

Who was Robert Thorp? Robert Thorp, a young British Army officer, arrived in Kashmir as a tourist in 1865. Thorp's mother, Jana was a Kashmiri and lived with her family at Sugan Yarinar in Budgam district. Robert Thorp's father, E-Thorp was an officer in the British army and would come to Jana's village very often. One day when Jana was herding her buffaloes, Thorp saw her. He fell in love with her. Jana belonged to an orthodox Muslim family and Thorp knew the affair would not mature into a long lasting relationship unless he embraced Islam. Jana's relative, Habibullah Teli was a soldier in the British army. Thorp approached Teli. He consented to their marriage. Jana's descendents, who still live in the village, say Thorp embraced Islam and the marriage was solemnized near a rock in the village. Jana was taken to England by her husband. After some time Robert Thorp was born.

Robert Thorp had heard stories about Kashmir's beauty and the suffering of its people from his mother Jana. He was desperate to visit Kashmir. In 1865, Thorp visited Kashmir. Foreigners required permission of the British authorities to

enter Kashmir. They could not stay in the valley for more than two months at that time. 27 year old Thorp stayed longer to study the appalling condition of the people of his mother's birthplace.

Why was Thorp murdered? Thorp was shocked to see the miserable plight of the people in his mother's birthplace. He raised his voice at a time when there was total sanction on information reaching the Government of India. Thorp took it on himself to inform and educate the British people about the situation in Kashmir by writing to the British Press without caring for consequences. Thorp felt the British were responsible for the plight of Kashmiris, as it was they who had sold it to the Maharaja under the "*Treaty of Amritsar*." Thorp pleaded before the Government to release Kashmiris from the wretched conditions, oppression and misery. He believed that public opinion was paramount to influence the Government to do what was needed.

Thorp traveled to the valley's nooks and corners collecting information about the plight of the people and thoroughly investigating the facts. He later on published a book entitled *Kashmir Misgovernment* and dedicated it to the people who, according to him "do not approve of cruelties upon human beings, and to those who are exalted from the moral, religious and social point of view and do not like oppression".

Thorp pleaded that the British were the first nation, which led the way for the abolition of slavery. When resistance was shown by one Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the Britishers forced Sheikh to obey the new Sovereign of Kashmir or consider himself as an enemy of British power. Sheikh yielded and Gulab Singh's troops were permitted to occupy Srinagar without any resistance. Thorp pleaded that British government had committed a wanton outrage and injustice by handing over Kashmir to the unjust Maharaja. He pleaded to the British Government to establish the facts as

he had done by laborious investigation in Kashmir itself. However, trouble came upon Thorp and he was ordered to leave Kashmir. Undeterred, Thorp returned to Srinagar on November 21, 1868, and next morning after his breakfast he died, possibly because of poisoning. Thorp was found dead on the Suleman Taing Hill.

The Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) an amalgam of various organizations was the first to acknowledge the services of Thorp. An award was constituted in his name. The award has so far been given to Patricia Gosman of the US, Mir Abdul Aziz, K.H. Khurshid, Subhan Hajam and others. However, since 2008, JKCCS has not held the function for various reasons.

Linen used as toilet paper

When the Queen of England used toilet paper, a Dogra Maharaja cleaned himself with special linen. The expenditure incurred on the purchase of this special cloth and the salary of the servants who cleaned the monarch was included in the expenditure of the palace. The monarch afforded this luxury when taxes on prostitutes formed 25% of the total income of the state (prostitution was legalized during that period). The rest came from taxes imposed mainly on the Muslim population of the state. However, notwithstanding the meager income, the rulers spent lavishly on the army, on the royal family and on entertaining guests.

During Partap Singh's regime, the state would prepare a sort of budget every year. It would include details of income and expenditure to be incurred on various works. However, Partap Singh's personal expenditure was never included in the budget. There used to be a separate head in the expenditure of the palace. It was titled "*Tati Pun*" (latrine expenditure).

After answering the call of nature, Partap Singh would stand (in a particular fashion) in the corridor. Three servants would remain present round the clock to wash the monarch. Two of them would stand in the corridor holding two ends of an entire roll of special linen. The Maharaja would lean in a particular fashion in the middle of the corridor with fine linen passing between his legs. The third servant would pour water from a silver container on his buttocks. The servants with linen would then give see-saw movements to the fine cloth. After every washing, the cloth roll would be given to the servants involved in "purifying" the Maharaja.

The Maharaja had also a Minister-in-waiting. He would administer *Jamalgota* (laxative) to the Maharaja to force him go to the latrine several times in a day. Every time, the Maharaja went to the latrine, a new roll of linen would be used to wash him.

(Inputs from *Shuhabnama* by Qudrutullah Shuhaab)

First newspaper

In second week of July 2012, during a debate held to commemorate the 107th birth anniversary of Prem Nath Bazaz, his son-in-law said Bazaz had the distinction of publishing the first newspaper from Srinagar.

The newspaper titled Vetasta was launched by Bazaz before 1930. He was corrected by one of the participants who said the first paper titled Al Rafiq was launched by Abdul Salam Rafiqui in 1896.

The newspaper was printed at Tuhfa Kashmir Press owned by Harmukh Prasad. The newspaper caused a stir in the Dogra regime. The second issue was as strong as the first one. The Dogra rulers could not take more of it. Consequently, the newspaper and the printing press were confiscated. Rafiqui was forced to leave the state.

Another session of the Anglo Oriental Conference was held in 1901. By then, Maharaja Partap Singh had also become its member. He saw his seat much behind Abdul Salam Rafiqui. He felt insulted and impressed upon the British rulers to persecute him.

Salam was arrested and imprisoned in Calcutta. He was, however, released unconditionally in Rangoon in 1903. It took Rafiqui some time to settle down in the alien land. He resumed publication of Al Rafiq from Rangoon and launched a campaign against British rulers and the persecution of Muslims by the Dogra rulers in Kashmir. The newspaper

was printed at Nizami Press Badayan and published from Rangoon. As they say a newspaper is incomplete without a printing press, Salam established his own printing press in 1909. Rafiqui would occasionally publish pamphlets and posters to highlight the plight of Indians and Kashmiris.

Silk Factory Agitation

He lived in my immediate neighborhood. Every morning he would come out and sit with his back towards the wall of my house. In the evening he would fly his pigeons. He passed away when I was in the 5th standard. Soon he was forgotten.

I came to know about his towering personality in 2007 while collecting information for my book *Bouquet - A tribute to unsung heroes of Kashmir*. He was Akber Khan and had taken part in the 1924 Silk Factory Agitation. I rushed to his son, Rafiq Ahmad Khan. He was not aware of his father's political activities. However, he produced some documents. His (Akber Khan's) wife had applied for freedom fighter pension in 1978. The papers were processed but the pension was not given. Akber's jail stay was less than six months. For Freedom Fighter pension, it must be more than six months. The documents gave an insight about his contribution to the freedom movement.

His cousin, Ali Muhammad Khan used to meet him on behalf of the family in Srinagar Central Jail. But he was not well informed. Akber had told him about the strike and the police action on them near erstwhile Hazuri Bagh. He had also told Ali about the persecution of Muslim workers in the Silk Factory. One day, the workers went on strike and took out a procession. The soldiers stormed the procession causing injuries to scores of workers. Some soldiers also sustained injuries.

Maharaja Partap Singh entrusted the probe to a Punjabi Muslim. He delayed the probe much to the annoyance of the poor workers. They workers finally returned to work but the

bitterness remained.

Historians say the strike took place in April 1924. The workers waved black flags to draw the attention of the Viceroy during his visit to Kashmir. A memorandum seeking rights for Muslims of Kashmir was submitted. The memorandum also sought an end to forced labour and an increase in Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees of the Silk Factory. It was signed by Saad-ud-Din Shawl and others. The Viceroy, Lord Reading referred the memorandum to the Maharaja with his remarks. The Maharaja was furious.

The Viceroy returned on October 28, 1924. The signatories were called. Two of them, Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Hasan Shah Naqashbandi were exiled. However, they were later pardoned.

Jabri Schools

In the early 30's, Maharaja Hari Singh opened schools across the State. Education was made compulsory. This order was implemented in letter and spirit. Government officials would search for children and take them to school. Muhammad Yusuf Khan, who played a vital role in revival of the Muslim Conference stated: "I belonged to a family of weavers. A master craftsman in our locality taught me the art of weaving. But, one day I was taken to the school by my scared parents. The school authorities gave me cloth for *kameez-pyjama* (shirt and trousers). I was also given one rupee to get it stitched. They also gave me books printed in England and a bundle of stationery items. Back home, my parents were delighted to see the cloth and the money I had brought. The books and stationery did not amuse them much."

Khan later graduated from SP College and served the State Government in various capacities. But for Maharaja Hari Singh's Jabri (compulsory) schools Khan and an entire generation would have stayed illiterate.

Some people criticize Hari Singh for forcing the people to send their children to schools. However, a peep into history bails him out. Much before Hari Singh's Jabri schools, Mirwaiz Rasool Shah also opened a school but it attracted few people. This must be the reason behind Hari Singh's idea of using force. What would he (Hari Singh) gain by such a venture? The question merits serious consideration.

Hari Singh wanted his subjects to read, write and compete with their counterparts in rest of the world. Qudrutullah Shuhab writes in his *Shuhab Nama*: "When I secured first

position in an essay competition, Maharaja Hari Singh invited me to his palace over a cup of tea." The idea behind this invitation was to encourage him. Shuhab served the Government of Pakistan in a senior capacity till his retirement.

Freedom fighters begs

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah completed his Masters of Science from Aligarh Muslim University on April 12, 1930 and immediately got appointed as a school teacher. He pursued his career seriously and did not join the Reading Room Party notwithstanding repeated pleas from its founders. Bashir Ahmad Vakil, one of the founders of the Reading Room and son of renowned Moulvi Muhammad Abdullah Vakil, was also a school teacher and earned Rs. 15 per month. Fortunately, he was not a careerist and gave first preference to fighting Dogra oppression.

Bashir and his cousin, Munshi Naseer-ud-Din (former editor of *Al Barq*) contributed Rs. 15 and set up a Reading Room at Fateh Kadal. They hired some chairs and purchased old newspapers and magazines to ensure the smooth running of the humble but important venture. However, it soon dawned on them that a good amount of money was needed to keep it running. Naseer was unemployed and Bashir could not contribute more than a few rupees. The two sat together and pondered. Suddenly, Bashir saw a glitter in Naseer's eyes and a pleasant smile on his lips. He had solved the problem. But, the plan had to be executed by Bashir who agreed to compromise his dignity and self-respect for the sake of the movement.

The *Hilal-e-Eid* (crescent) appeared on the firmament. There was lot of festivity in the city. People were purchasing mutton, vegetables, clothes and sweets but Bashir was busy preparing himself for playing an unparalleled role in the history of the freedom struggle. Naseer was biting his nails for

putting his cousin to a very difficult test.

On the day of Eid, people put on new clothes and assembled in the Eidgah. Bashir, however, chose a worn out dress much to the disappointment of his relatives and friends. Slowly he walked towards Eidgah. He stood firmly in a corner and stretched out his hand. *Khudayi Sunde Khatre* (For Allah's sake), he cried. In his new avtaar, he saw himself begging for money and people responding generously. The congregation ended. People rushed to their homes. Naseer was eagerly waiting for him. He had done a commendable job. 90 rupees had been collected. Two pearls rolled down the cheeks of Naseer as a token of respect for his great cousin.

Soon after, the Reading Room wore a new look. New chairs and tables were purchased. Bashir's heroics in the Eidgah ensured uninterrupted flow of newspapers, journals and magazines for the Reading Room.

(Inputs from *Tareekh-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir* by Munshi Naseer-ud-Din and *Aatish-e-Chinar* by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah)

Freedom movement launched

Although the Reading Room provided a platform for conscious Kashmiris to give vent to their feelings, the freedom movement was formally launched on May 8, 1930 from Mohallah Haji Rather, Fatheh Kadal.

It started from a discussion between Munshi Naseer Ahmad (Editor of *Al Barq*) and his cousin Moulvi Bashir Ahmad, a teacher by profession in the sprawling lawns of what was then called Teacher's Training School Magarmal Bagh. The duo decided to set up a Reading Room. Bashir and Naseer contributed Rs. 5 and 4.50 respectively and hired a few chairs, tables and old magazines. The Reading Room started functioning from a rented room at Fateh Kadal. The duo needed funds to sustain the noble venture. Naseer urged Bashir to beg at Eidgah on Eid Day. He agreed and collected around Rs. 90 from the people. However, they soon realized that the Reading Room was not serving any purpose. It was used by some unscrupulous elements to play *Chauser* (Gambling).

Meanwhile, the daughter-in-law of a shopkeeper, Hasan Mir who lived in the close vicinity of the Reading Room passed away. The shopkeeper's brother, Mohammad Sikander who worked in the telegraph office was known to Bashir and Naseer. They persuaded Sikander to allow them to host the *rasam-e-qul* (last rites) of the deceased. Sikander agreed. The duo invited around 200 people and spent Rs. 9 on tea. On May 8, 1930 the *rasam-e-qul* was held. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who had returned from Aligarh on April 12, 1930 was also invited. However, he did not attend the meeting. The duo apprised the

invitees of the need for launching an organized movement. The people were told to keep the meeting a secret. Earlier, Saad-ud-Din Shahl was extorted for political reasons by the Dogra ruler. The people, therefore, knew the importance of maintaining secrecy.

Three young men, Gulam Nabi Gilkar, Mohammad Rajab (M.A. L.L.B) and Yahya Rafique joined the Reading Room party then and there. The "five man army" then decided to awaken people every nook and corner of the valley. Munshi Naseer was told to go to rural areas. Others were entrusted the job of working in the city.

Drama that changed Kashmir

On July 13, 1931, 22 people fell to bullets outside Srinagar Central Jail. A large number of people had gathered outside the jail to express solidarity with Abdul Qadeer Khan who was arrested for delivering a fiery speech against Maharaja Hari Singh at Shah-e-Hamdan's shrine on June 21, 1931. Qadeer's trial was held inside the jail premises for security reasons.

July 13 is considered a turning point in the State's history. It, therefore, becomes necessary to have a clear understanding of the incident. Historians and commoners believe Kashmir erupted when the Holy Quran was desecrated by a constable at Jammu. But was the Holy Book really desecrated?

On April 19, 1931 when an Imam was delivering the Eid sermon in a Municipal Park at Jammu, a police constable, Chowdhury Ram Chand intervened and directed the Imam to refrain from delivering the sermon. The Muslims took it seriously and registered strong protest. The incident, however, went un-noticed in Srinagar. When the news reached Srinagar, the situation in Jammu had pacified.

Late Professor Noor-ud-Din has written in his diary that the leaders of the Reading Room Party pondered and decided to stage a similar drama at Jammu. Noted historian, Shabnam Qayoom also makes a mention of Noor-ud-Din's diary in his *Kashmir ka Siyasi Inqilaab*, page 50, Vol. 1: "A plan was devised to stage a similar drama to evoke strong public reaction in Srinagar. A Muslim constable was taken into confidence by the members of the Young Man's Association, Jammu. Posters were kept ready. Constable Sheikh Muhammad Ismaiel accused his Hindu colleague of desecrating the Quran and violent protests broke out in Jammu and Srinagar."

The Reading Room Party and Young Man's Association authored drama evoked the desired reaction in Srinagar. A series of lectures were delivered by Moulvi Abdullah Vakil, Munshi Naseer, Moulvi Bashir and Ghulam Nabi Gilkar. This is when Sheikh Abdullah was introduced to the public for the first time.

A few days before delivering his famous speech at Khankahi Moula, Qadeer was riding with Major Abet, the British army officer, and the former British Resident in Dal Lake in the Kashmir Sunflower houseboat owned by Aziz Wangnoo. As they were nearing Hazratbal, Qadeer saw people rushing toward the Shrine and requested Major Abet to drop him on the banks so that he could join the Friday congregation. Major Abet is believed to have said to Qadeer, "Tell your God to free Kashmiris from this oppressive rule." The British officer's words inspired Qadeer to deliver the fiery speech. To save himself from arrest, Qadeer changed his clothes in Mohammad Amin Farooqi's house. (*Kashmir ka Siyasi Inqilaab*, Vol I, pg 55.)

On June 21, 1931 hundreds of Muslims from different schools of thought assembled at a function at Khankahi Moula where the Muslim leadership forged unity and constituted a seven-member committee to take the struggle forward. The members were Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Mirwaiz Moulvi Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz Ahmadullah Hamdani, Aga Syed Hassan Jalali, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Munshi Shuhab-ud-Din. When the leaders dispersed, Qadeer appeared on the podium and shouted slogans against Hindus. He said: "Listen, time has come when we have to act. Requests and memoranda will serve no purpose at this point of time. It will not end tyranny and it will not end desecration of Quran. Stand up and fight the tyrant rulers." He pointed towards Raj Mahal (Palace) and said, "Raze it to the ground."

Qadeer was arrested and put on trial. On July 13, 1931 when a lot of people assembled outside the Central jail to express solidarity with Qadeer, the Dogra soldiers opened fire and killed 22 men on the spot. Scores sustained injuries.

Who was Qadeer?

Much has been written and said about Abdul Qadeer Khan but to this day nobody knows who he was and what happened to him. The people who wrote the history of Kashmir have unfortunately made a passing reference of the person who changed the course of Kashmir history on June 21, 1931. He deserves a better deal. But before glorifying him, it is necessary to know who he was and where he came from. Theories about his life and origins abound, and remain fuzzy.

He was a Kashmiri

Professor Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Shah of Hathi Khan Mohalla during an interview with the author in 2007 said that before joining the higher education department he was in police for a brief stint. "One day I was going through a file when a man with a wheatish complexion walked into my office. My colleagues simply ignored him. After some time, he introduced himself as Qadeer's brother. I looked at him curiously. He was wearing a ring on right ear. Qadeer was a household name in Kashmir then. I offered him a chair and ordered tea for him. He had come to my office regarding some problems in his job; he was an employee in the police department. Since in Kashmir a non-state subject can't get a job, particularly in those times when the State Subject Law was strictly enforced, it is clear that Qadeer was a Kashmiri."

Noted journalist, Sheikh Abdul Qayoom holds a contrary view. According to him, during a Jirga attended by Nehru and Gaffer Khan in 1958, the Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam

Muhammad conferred State subject status on Gutlibagh residents. Jirgo is a sort of Parliament of the Afghan tribals. My friend Peer Mairaj-ud-Din of Baramulla met an old man in Islamabad (Pakistan) in 2005. He said: "The old man spoke good Kashmiri. He turned out to be Qadeer's son, Abdul Saboor Khan Durani."

Durani told Peer 'it was my father Abdul Qadeer Khan Durani who addressed the people at Khankah-e-Moula on June 21 and changed the course of freedom struggle. We lived in Gutli Bagh, Ganderbal and my mother hailed from Kaloosa, Bandipora of Baramulla district. He worked as a cook with a British officer who was staying in Kashmir. My relatives still live in Gutli Bagh. They have been living there for the past 300 years after their migration from Afghanistan. Emotions overwhelmed Saboor Khan for a moment, but he pulled himself together and continued his tale. "My mother's name was Ayesha and she was born to Malik family of Kaloosa, Bandipora. My sister's name was Noora."

Saboor Khan had mentioned his father's martyrdom, but did not know how, when and where Qadeer was martyred. Nor did he know where Qadeer was laid to rest. "When 22 Kashmiris fell to bullets outside Srinagar Central Jail, I was just a five year old chap. My mother told me about father. He could speak Kashmiri and was influenced by the Ahrar leaders," he said. Ahrars were an anti-British and anti-Qadiani resistance group in Punjab.

Like father like son

Saboor narrated how he was brought up and how he started taking part in the freedom struggle of Kashmir. "After my father's martyrdom I was brought up by a renowned scholar Moulana Wafai who took me to his home at Shopian. I lived with him for two years. He later sent me to Moulana Abdul Gani, a close relative of Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, of Kupwara where I lived for three years. I went to Mian Marg

Gilgit where I stayed for five years. I came back to Kaloosa, Bandipora where I stayed with my maternal uncles. Finally I shifted to Srinagar and lived at Barbar Shah. My mother and sister also lived with me."

Saboor Khan had hesitantly spoken about life to Peer Mairaj, but his account makes the adage like father like son sound true. "Soon after the landing of Indian troops in Kashmir in 1947 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became the emergency administrator. A few years later I became a member of Political Conference and was arrested from Delhi Muslim Hotel, Amira Kadal along with Muhammad Amin Nehvi Advocate, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Salati Advocate, Abdul Rehman Shagoo, Abdul Hamid Karra, Ghulam Qadir Hawa Baz and Professor Mohi-ud-Din Hajni. We were shifted to Badami Bagh where all of us were severely tortured. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Sheikh Ghulam Qadir Ganderbali used to call me Reyi Badshah (Ant King) because I would climb poles like an ant to hoist Pakistani flags."

Saboor Khan was released after a while. Just 15 days before his arrest, Saboor had married Fatima the daughter of late Assadullah Mir of Aloocho Bagh, Srinagar. After his release, Saboor went underground for several years. But he was arrested and externed after a month-long detention. He went to Azad Kashmir from Uri and got involved in the movement against Qadianis. He was arrested and detained at Lahore. After his release he came back to Kashmir. His wife had left him. A shocked Saboor went underground for two years after divorcing his wife. Finally he succeeded in crossing the cease-fire line and lives in Pakistan. He could not attend the funeral of his mother and sister.

"For several years I would receive letters from my relatives in Kashmir, but not now," Saboor had told Peer Mairaj.

A Muslim from Uttar Pradesh?

Shabnam Qayoom, a writer says he did extensive research for

Traitors

The July 13 massacre of 1931 triggered massive demonstrations across Kashmir. Violence was also reported from some places especially from Srinagar. The Maharaja responded by repressive measures which was taken note of by people in India including Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal. The situation became unmanageable for the Maharaja.

Finally he approached the elected representatives through his Prime Minister Raja Hari Krishen Koul. A deal was finally struck on August 18, 1931. The Government agreed to release prisoners and reinstate the suspended employees. The representatives agreed to call off the agitation. However, this did not go well with the masses. The representatives were accused of betrayal. People staged demonstrations against them. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was in the eye of the storm. The deal was struck after he met Sir Teg Bahadur Sapru several times in Nedous Hotel. Sapru was on a special mission in Kashmir.

The representatives went into hiding. But somehow, many people came to know about Sheikh Abdullah's Mirza Bagh hide out. Mufti Zia-ud-Din informed him well in time and requested him to run for his life. Meanwhile, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad came running and literally pulled him out of the room. They escaped to Jamalatta and sought refuge in the house of Abdul Gani Wani. Meanwhile, an irate mob led by Peer Amir-ud-Din and Abdul Razaq Kaboo entered the Mirza Bagh house and found Sheikh missing. Amir and Kaboo were armed with knives. They damaged the house and went out to

his book, *Kashmir Ka Siyasi Inqilaab*. The research work took him to the Rampur area in Uttar Pradesh. "I was told that Qadeer was born in Rampur but left his native land in early childhood. But they couldn't tell much about his father," Qayoom said.

search for Sheikh Abdullah. The following night around seven persons stormed the room again but Sheikh was not there.

A few days later, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Mufti Zia-ud-Din managed to take the leaders to Mirwaiz Manzil to chalk out a future strategy. The leaders blamed each other for the fiasco. While they were discussing the situation, people came to know about the meeting. Soon, thousands of people assembled outside the Mirwaiz Manzil and raised slogans against the leaders. At this moment, Sheikh Abdullah showed exemplary courage. He opened the window and tried to pacify the angry people. However, the people did not seem interested in listening to him. Sheikh was abused and ridiculed. Someone from the room threw a paper slip into the crowd. "The leaders will explain their position at Jamia Masjid tomorrow," it read. The assembled people left and the leaders heaved a sigh of relief.

A leader proposed to accept the mistake and seek pardon from the people. Sheikh Abdullah rejected the proposal. According to him, it would erode the credibility of the leadership. Saad-ud-Din Shawl seconded him. "We will explain to the people that the accord had not dealt a blow to the movement. On the other hand, the Government had accepted our position as representatives of the people. We will also give an ultimatum to the Prime Minister to fulfill the demands within some time," he explained.

Saad-ud-Din Shawl while accepting the blunder said they must frame a strategy to frustrate the accord in a way so that blame comes on the Government.

The next day, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah explained the terms and conditions of the accord at Jamia Masjid. "I assure you in this mosque that we will not betray the trust you have reposed on us. We will make the Government fulfill the conditions." At this stage, Sheikh Abdullah stood up. He had the Holy Quran in

his hands. "I swear by this Book that I will stay faithful to the movement. The accord is there for two months only." He sought support from the people.

Shabnam Qayoom says that Sheikh Abdullah lied. There was no time frame fixed, he writes on page 110 of his *Kashmir ka Siyasi Inqilaab, Vol. I*.

The anger did not subside fully after the Jamia Masjid rally. Next, the leaders faced some tough moments at Sopore. Abdul Gani Malik of Arampora, Sopore threw a shoe at Sheikh Abdullah. It hit him in the chest. Another shoe hit Ashai. The angry people were pacified by Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Sofi Muhammad Akber. The leaders were greeted with slogans at Islamabad (Anantnag), as well.

It took the people some time to calm down. The leaders availed this opportunity. They came out and violated the conditions of the accord through a series of speeches.

On September 21, 1931, Sheikh Abdullah was arrested. His arrest evoked widespread demonstrations. The soldiers stormed a rally at Khankahi-e-Moula where Mufti Jalal-ud-Din was addressing the people. The soldiers resorted to cane charge and also opened fire on the demonstrators. Three persons identified as Rasool Hagroo of Drugjan, Hasan Mir of Chinkral Mohallah and Assad Kumar of Narparistan died on the spot. The movement took a new turn and the leaders' credibility was restored and that would hugely impact the politics in Kashmir in the following post-1947 decades.

Ahrar arrive in Kashmir

The July 13, 1931 incident evoked massive response across the sub-continent. Muslims held demonstrations at Amritsar, Lahore, Lucknow, Delhi and elsewhere. Dr. Iqbal dissociated from the Kashmir Committee on August 3, 1931 and entrusted the Kashmir job to Majlis-e-Ahrar.

The Majlis-e-Ahrar was considered a fundamentalist group even in Kashmir. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah did not like them and in his statement issued from jail flayed their involvement in Kashmir affairs. According to Shabnam Qayoom (Vol. I of *Kashmir Ka Siyasi Inqilaab*), Sheikh Abdullah had a truck with the Maharaja's men and the statement was issued at their behest.

Whether the Sheikh had truck with the government or not, his statement did help the Maharaja. Taking advantage of the statement, the Prime Minister of Kashmir banned entry of foreign organizations and individuals into Kashmir. He stated: "Since Maharaj's government had constituted a commission to probe the incident (July 13), it has been decided not to allow any outsider to enter Kashmir."

On August 18, 1931, the Majlis-e-Ahrar passed a resolution seeking enforcement of rights of Kashmiris irrespective of their religion. It was also decided that Ahrars would help Kashmiris through peaceful means. A few days later a massive rally was held at Delhi Gate, Lahore. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal presided and urged the Majlis to violate the ban on entry into Kashmir.

The Majlis observed August 31, 1931 as Youm-e-Dua (Day of

supplications) to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir. On the same day, the Majlis announced that a fact finding team headed by Moulana Mazhar Ali Azhar would visit Kashmir on September 2, 1931. This statement created a stir in Kashmir. The Prime Minister sent a telegram to Moulana Azhar requesting him to meet the Governor for Jammu at Sialkote. Moulana agreed and a meeting was held at the Deputy-Commissioner's residence. The fact finding team was allowed to visit Kashmir on the following conditions:

1. No demonstration shall be held in Kashmir
2. The Fact finding team will act objectively
3. The team shall be State guests

Meanwhile in Kashmir, the government and local leaders reached an agreement. They were released and urged not to meet the Ahrar team during its stay in Kashmir. And that is exactly what happened. The Ahrar team was also prevented from coming out of their houseboat to meet the leaders. The team was ridiculed for accepting official hospitality.

The author of *Carvaan-e-Ahrar* has commented on the indifference of the Kashmiri leaders vis-a-vis the Ahrar team. He said: "The historian's job would become easy if he understands this incident in right perspectives."

The mission failed but Majlis-e-Ahrar decided to launch a civil disobedience movement in Kashmir.

Mirwaiz calls for Jihad

Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah gave a new turn to the freedom movement in September, 1931. He called for Jihad much to the annoyance of the Maharaja. Mirwaiz's call evoked massive response. Thousands of people came out with shovels, axes, sticks and assembled at Khanyar near Dastgeer Sahib's shrine on September 24. Some people were also armed with guns. However, no untoward incident took place.

The protests against the July 13, incident continued for several months. The protests turned violent in September with the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders. Mirwaiz responded by calling for Jihad. Maharaja was forced to promulgate an ordinance called notification 19-L. It had been drafted on the lines of the Burma ordinance of 1818. It was also referred to as Burma ordinance. Non-compliance of the ordinance could win a person imprisonment up to three years or flogging up to 30 strips or fine up to Rs. 1000. However, the people ignored the ordinance and assembled at Khanyar. Srinagar was tense. Maharaja called Mirwaiz and his colleagues to his palace. According to Shabnam Qayoom (*Siyasi Inqilaab*, Vol. I), the Maharaja was furious. He came out without wearing his head gear. He had a pistol in his hand and scolded the Mirwaiz. The people were later told to disperse. They obeyed and dispersed peacefully.

The Maharaja responded with brute force. A massive military parade was held in Srinagar on September 25. People were arrested and flogged in four flogging centres established at Central Jail, Exhibition grounds, Police Station Maharaj Gunj

and Police Station Kothibagh. People were forced to say: "*Maharaja Bahadur Ki Jai*." The courageous people chanted the words but behaved as if it had caused nausea. Angered, the soldiers arrested hundreds of persons and flogged them. Three persons died as a result of flogging. The most notable among them was Molvi Ahmadullah of Baramulla. One Ghulam Bhat of Srinagar died in Kothibagh Police station. Similarly Ahmad Bhat of Srinagar died in Central Jail.

Flogging of protesters evoked severe reaction in other parts of the state including the city of Jammu. Maharaja had to extend 19-L to the whole of the state.

Muslim Conference revived

The 1938 resolution seeking conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference evoked severe reaction from the members. However, with the exception of Moulvi Abdullah Vakil, Sheikh Ahmad Din, Mirwaiz Ghulam Nabi Hamdani and others, all the members voted in favour of the conversion.

Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas accepted the conversion conditionally. Abbas put the following conditions:

1. National Conference shall stay away from Congress
2. The conversion should not adversely affect identity of 80% Muslims of the state
3. Muslims and Non-Muslims cannot unite. However, they can work for achieving common political goals, and
4. We expect Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah not to harm the cause of Muslims.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah accepted all the conditions without any hesitation. However, he soon defied the conditions and allowed the dissident members to think about revival of the Muslim Conference. High level meetings were held at Lahore and elsewhere but in Srinagar, Qureshi Muhammad Yusuf worked very hard to muster support for the revival of the Muslim Conference. He approached college going students and succeeded in forming a strong group. Muhammad Yusuf Khan was his favorite.

Yusuf who passed away in 2010 at his Balgarden, Srinagar residence talked to me in detail. He said: "The National

Conference workers would not allow us to assemble at public places. But we soon devised a method. We set up a Darasgah at Reshi Sahib Habba Kadal. Its membership soon swelled to 1000 young men. We would meet there to chalk out future strategy. When we became strong enough, Qureshi Muhammad Yusuf wrote a letter to Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas. He expressed willingness to revive the Muslim Conference. However, he instructed us to involve Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. The Mirwaiz's inclusion added impetus to our group."

Yusuf did not know the date when the Muslim Conference was revived. According to www.kmsnews.org, it was revived on April 9, 1943. Yusuf said: "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would organize a Millad procession every year. In 1943, the Martand edited by Pandit Kashap Bandhu wrote an editorial criticizing Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah for his involvement in the Millad processions. Sheikh Abdullah did not take out a procession that year. We decided to avail the opportunity. Qureshi Muhammad Yusuf did not encourage us saying Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah had been opposing the processions till 1942. We requested him to take up the matter with the Mirwaiz. The permission was finally granted and we took out a historic procession. This procession scared the National Conference and Muslim Conference became a reality. Soon after the Muslim Conference also held its annual session."

Flash Back

Quaid-e-Azam arrives in Kashmir

Quaid undertook his last Kashmir journey on May 8, 1944. This tour had far reaching consequences on the politics of the State. Unfortunately, Muslims had divided into two groups. The Muslim Conference President, Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas invited him on behalf of his organization. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah went to Delhi and extended an invitation on behalf of National Conference. The Quaid accepted the invitation and at the end of the Punjab Muslim League session at Sialkote, he proceeded towards Suchetgarh. Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas, Allah Rakha Sagar and Chowdhury Hamidullah Khan received him on behalf of Muslim Conference. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad welcomed him on behalf of National Conference.

The Quaid was received by the leaders of Muslim Conference and National Conference at Qazigund. The National Conference workers attacked the car of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah and Syed Meerak Shah. However, Bakshi intervened to restore peace.

Thousands of people welcomed the Quaid at Khanabal. He had lunch at the Dak Bungalow and relaxed for a few moments. Thousands of people waited outside to have a glimpse of the great leader. The crowd created a stampede causing injuries to scores of persons. Later, amid chanting of slogans, the procession started its march towards Srinagar. The road had been decorated with buntings. Photographs of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Quaid-e-Azam and Anwar Shah Pasha had been adjusted amidst the buntings. People stood

on both sides of the road to welcome the Quaid.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah accompanied by Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and Moulana Masoodi received the Quaid at Batwara. The National Conference had been given the charge of welcoming the Quaid from Qazigund to Srinagar. The journey took 11 hours.

Around 6 in the evening the Quaid reached Srinagar. A function had been organized at Partap Park where more than sixty thousand people were waiting for the Quaid. The whole of the park had been tastefully decorated with buntings and flowers.

As soon as the Quaid appeared on the stage along with Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders, the people raised slogans. The people showered flowers on the Quaid to show their love for him.

A number of non-Muslims were also present. Renowned social activist, Mirdula Sarabhai also participated in the function. The function was started by Pran Nath Jalali who sung the famous poem Saray Jehan Say Acha Hindustan Hamara. Pandit Jia Lal Kelam Advocate, read the welcome note in English. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah read its Urdu translation.

The Quaid's response was not received well by Jia Lal Kelam. He walked out of the function in protest along with his non-Muslim friends. The Quaid said: "I thank you for the rousing reception. This was not for Jinnah. It was for the Muslim League. You have not honoured me. You have honoured the Muslims of India."

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah used "popular leader of Indian Muslims" for Quaid-e-Azam repeatedly in his speech. As soon as the Partap Park function concluded, the Quaid was taken in a procession by Muslim Conference workers to Drugjan. Muslim Conference leader, Muhammad Ismail Sagar welcomed the Quaid. He said: "Kashmir is fortunate to play

host to Quaid-e-Azam." The Quaid responded by saying: "Muslims worship one Allah. The Prophet (SAW) is also common. Why should not the Muslims forge unity. I request the Muslims of Jammu Kashmir to stay united. I am a Muslim and my sympathies are with Muslims."

Later the Quaid went to Nishat to stay in the house of Sir Maratib Ali. It is in place to mention here that Maratib Ali's son, Amjad Ali, was Pakistan's ambassador to America. Later, he became the Finance Minister of Pakistan. Today the house (Kashif) is in dilapidated condition and the government runs a branch of social welfare department in it.

After spending a few days in Kashif, the Quaid shifted to a houseboat (Queen Elizabeth) in Jhelum near Lal Mandi. The Quaid also stayed in government guest house No 4.

The Quaid stayed in Srinagar for two months and 17 days. He attended a number of functions. Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah hosted a sumptuous feast in his honor. 300 guests besides the Quaid were served wazwaan. As many as 21 dishes were served. Fateh Muhammad Sahib Karelvi, Mirza Attaullah Rajourvi and Allah Rakha Sagarate from a single plate.

Mirwaiz gifted a beautiful gown to the Quaid. He put it on immediately and said: "Do I look like a Kashmiri now." The people around him replied: "Yes." The Quaid was greatly pleased.

A reception was also hosted by the former students of Aligarh Muslim University at Amar Singh Club. A number of leaders including Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Professor Nazir-ul-Islam, Mohammad Yusuf Buch, Mohi-ud-Din Karra, Amarnath Raina, Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Jia Lal Kelam, Janki Nath Chakoo, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mudsudhan Kak, Ghulam Muhammad jeweler, Ghulam Muhammad Shah and others were present.

(As narrated by Muhammad Yusuf Khan, a prominent Muslim Conference worker and Tabasum Kashmiri a noted columnist)

Quaid's host

On May 10, 1944 the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah arrived in Srinagar to a rousing reception. Later, he went to Nishat and stayed there for a couple of days. He then shifted to a houseboat near Lal Mandi. During his stay in Srinagar, Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was invited by Maharaja Hari Singh to his palace. The Quaid expressed reservations but the Muslim Conference workers urged him to stay for a while in the palace. The reluctant Quaid agreed and went to the palace.

The Quaid was warmly received. Scores of servants remained at his disposal round the clock but nobody from the royal family came to see him. Hari Singh did not prove a good host. After, a couple of days, the Quaid decided to shift to his houseboat. When he left the palace, nobody from the royal family was around to see him off.

The Quaid continued to meet people from all walks of life and discussed with them matters of importance. He wanted to have a word with the Maharaja as well. But the Maharaja avoided the meeting on one pretext or the other. A formal request for a meeting was turned down by Hari Singh. When the Quaid finally left, Chowdhury Abbas accompanied him up to Muzaffarabad.

He dined with Abbas but was not in a good mood. Abbas wanted to know the reason but could not muster the courage to ask the Quaid why he was upset. Contrary to Abbas's belief, the Sherwani incident had not upset the Quaid. Sherwani, a condemned cycle thief, pelted stones on

Quaid's motorcade. However, he and his associates were chased away by Muslim Conference workers and the police. Late in the evening, the Quaid told Abbas that the Maharaja had refused to meet him. Abbas got angry but remained silent.

The Maharaja had a different yard stick for M.K.C. Gandhi. When he visited the Kashmir valley to secure release of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who was jailed for his Quit Kashmir Slogan, the Maharaja and his wife personally received him. The Maharani touched his feet and sought his blessings. He was offered fruits and milk which he took along in his car. Gandhi interacted with Maharaja in the palace lawns when only Maharani and Karan Singh were around. (Karan Singh's Autobiography)

Quaid interacts with NC workers

A number of receptions were hosted by different groups in Quaid-e-Azam's honour. The National Conference also hosted a reception. Prominent worker and a close aide of Sher-e-Kashmir, Mohi-ud-Din Zahra Hamdani posed three questions to the Quaid. The Quaid answered the questions politely.

Question No 1: Is creation of Pakistan possible in presence of overwhelming majority of Hindus of India?

The Quaid replied, "If De Veer can separate Ireland from Britian, why should not 10 crore Muslims succeed in creating a state of their own."

Question No 2: If Pakistan comes into existence, will it not be a poor country?

The Quaid replied: "No. Not at all. It is better to live in a shabby hut in Pakistan than live in a mansion in insecure India."

Question No 3: Keeping the Muslim Majority population of the State in view which party can serve the interests of Muslims better, National Conference or Muslim Conference?

The Quaid replied: "Apparently National Conference. But can you tell me how many non-Muslims are members of National Conference."

This stunned the National Conference workers. Hamdani had to eat a humble pie. Someone from the crowd cried, Budh Singh, Kashap Bandhu. This was greeted with laughter by the

people present much to the discomfort of the National Conference workers.

The Quaid said: "Had non-Muslims joined the National Conference, the Maharaja's government would have succumbed in seven days."

Muslim Conference leader Ghulam Muhammad Jeweler, who later joined Sardar Ibrahiem's government in Azad Kashmir, hosted another reception in Amar Singh Club. A number of non-Muslims were invited. The president of All India Kashmir Pandit Yuvak Sabha, Shiv Narain Fotedar who later became a member of Rajya Sabha during Bakshi's regime said: "I am leader of minorities but not Jinnah of Kashmir. The Quaid turned towards him and said: "I wish you good luck."

Gandhi and the Sale deed of Amritsar

It is widely believed that the father of the Indian nation, M.K.C. Gandhi called the Sale deed of Amritsar a *Bikri pater* (sale deed) during his July-August visit of Kashmir in 1947. It is further believed that Gandhi refused to drink a cup of milk offered by Maharani Tara Devi when he called on Maharaja Hari Singh. Gandhi is also supposed to have expressed his displeasure over Dogra regime's atrocities on the hapless people of Kashmir. However, there is no evidence to corroborate this. Gandhi was on a mission in Kashmir. How could he afford to annoy the Maharaja at that crucial juncture of history? Further, why did Gandhi leave New Delhi to visit Kashmir at a time when the sub-continent was to be partitioned in two weeks?

Sher-e-Kashmir was arrested in 1946 for the Quit Kashmir Movement. Jawahar Lal Nehru wanted to appear as a defense counsel to get his "friend" out. However, he was denied permission and even arrested by the Dogra police. Time was running out of his hands. Sher-e-Kashmir had to play a vital role in the coming months. His release, therefore, was very important for pursuing the Indian agenda.

Nehru was worried for another reason also. He knew the Maharaja's inclinations towards independence. He wanted to visit Kashmir to pressurize the Maharaja not to declare independence. But Lord Mountbatten, the Indian Viceroy did not allow him to visit Kashmir. He offered to visit the Kashmir valley himself. The Maharaja proved a hard nut for him. He sent the Viceroy on fishing trips to avoid any serious

interaction with him. The frustrated Viceroy one day took off his clothes and sunbathed in the nude.

This was followed by the visit of his Chief of Staff. This visit also went in vain. Once again, Nehru wanted to go to Kashmir personally. Both Mountbatten and Sardar Patel strongly disapproved of his visit. However, they agreed to let Gandhi visit Kashmir.

Gandhi's visit commenced on July 31 and ended on August 2, 1947. A massive demonstration greeted him at Baramulla. The demonstrators protested his Kashmir visit. On August 1, he met the Maharaja and had a separate long meeting with Maharani Tara Devi. (Source: *Campbell Johnson's Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 117)

Noted columnist, A.G. Noorani wrote in *Frontline*, March 28 - April 10, 2009: "Asaf Ali's performance as defense counsel in the Sheikh's trial for sedition was splendid. He rested his case on the people's right to demand freedom from a ruler whose title to rule was derived from what Mahatma Gandhi aptly called a 'sale-deed', the Treaty of Amritsar (1846) by which the Dogra Gulab Singh bought Kashmir for Rs.75 lakh."

While a columnist of Noorani's repute cannot be easily refuted, he too has not quoted the source of this information. As mentioned above Gandhi met Hari Singh and Tara Devi separately when nobody was around. Who, therefore, reported that Gandhi had uttered the word *Bikri Pater* (Sale deed)? Who reported Gandhi's disapproval of Dogra atrocities on Kashmir? On the contrary, Gandhi had to be polite because he was seeking a favour.

Now what was that favour?

Sher-e-Kashmir was released in September 1947. Hari Singh sought a written apology which was readily given. The historical document has been published in Sardar Patel's papers. It is also published by a budding historian from Kashmir, Ashiq Husain Bhat, in his book.

The Times, London, October 25, 1947 wrote: "What exactly did Gandhi tell the Maharaja? We will never know, but the chain of events that followed his visit is an indicator of what must have happened. After his visit, the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Ram Chandar Kak, who had no inclination towards India was replaced by Janak Singh and then by the Indian loyalist, Mehr Chand Mahajan. The British officers in the Kashmir Army and Police were dismissed including the Inspector General of Police and the Chief of the General Staff. Orders for construction of a bridge over the Ravi River, near Pathankot, to allow connectivity between India and Jammu and Kashmir were issued. The road between Jammu and Kathua was improved and a telegraph line was constructed between Jammu and the valley. This was all possible because of assistance from India."

Gandhi's visit, therefore, changed the course of Kashmir history. He did what other leaders including Nehru and Lord Mounbatten could not do. He got Kashmir for India.

Gilkar founds AJK

Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, one of the pioneers of the freedom struggle was known for his boldness and sincerity. It was Gilkar who persuaded Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to join the freedom struggle in 1931. Dismayed by the Conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference in 1939, Gilkar strived hard for the revival of the Muslim Conference in the 40's. And in the eventful year of 1947, Gilkar did what others were scared to do. On October 4, he founded the Azad Kashmir government. However, it had to be re-founded on October 24 by Sardar Ibrahiem Khan because Gilkar came to Srinagar "to tell Kashmiri's about the importance of joining the newly formed state of Pakistan." Contrary to common belief, Gilkar did not come to Srinagar at the instance of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah to woo Sher-e-Kashmir. And until his arrest in November, Gilkar worked like an ordinary worker.

After the ouster of the Nawab of Junagarh by Government of India, the Pakistan government approached Mirza Bashir-ud-Din of Qadiyan and authorized him to take appropriate measures with regard to Kashmir. Mirza called G.N. Gilkar to Lahore. Several rallies were held at Rattan Bagh. Besides Gilkar, these rallies were attended by Mufti Zia-ud-Din Poonchi, Chowdhury Rahim Dad Advocate, Master Mir Alam Kotli, Ammanullah Khan of Khor Pattan, Professor Muhammad Ishaq Qureshi, and Syed Muhammad Abdullah Qadri. The idea of forming the Azad Kashmir government was put forth in these rallies. Mufti Zia-ud-Din was asked to

announce the government but he refused. Syed Muhammad Abdullah Qadri also refused. Finally G.N. Gilkar came forward and took the bold step. Gilkar thus became the first president of Azad Kashmir. However, he chose to be known as Anwar in his new capacity.

In his first presidential address, Gilkar urged Kashmiris to defy the Maharaja. The address reads: "With the end of British rule, Maharaja Hari Singh's claim to rule the state by virtue of the Sale deed of Amritsar has also come to an end. Kashmir was sold to Hari Singh's grandfather, Gulab Singh for 7.5 million Nanak Shahi Sikay. Now the people have formed an ad-hoc government with its headquarters at Tradkhel. From October 4, if Hari Singh or any other person claims to govern the state, he shall be punished in accordance with the laws framed by the ad-hoc government. The people should follow the rules framed by the ad-hoc government from now onwards." The presidential address was carried by all the newspapers of Pakistan on October 5, 1947.

Gilkar stayed in the presidential chamber at Tradkhel for two days only. In two days he realized that his presence was more needed in the streets of Srinagar. A young worker of Muslim Conference who happened to be Gilkar's name sake (whom Gilkar would call young Gilkar) narrated the incident in an exclusive interview. "I had just passed my matriculation examination. One day I was carrying a bundle of Muslim Conference posters. Ama Ganie, a condemned thief and a halqa president of National Conference intercepted me. I dropped the bundle of posters but his son identified me. I was arrested and taken first to Bakshi Rashid and then to Police Station Sekidafar. On the third day, we heard Gikar Sahib had been arrested. Usman Chasha, a known criminal walked in and slapped Gilkar Sahib for urging people to join Pakistan. Gilkar presented his other cheek. Next day all of us including Gilkar Sahib were taken to sub-jail Kothibagh. Late

Mirwaiz, Moulana Farooq's father, Moulvi Amin was also arrested and lodged there. Then we were shifted to Central Jail. Gilkar Sahib refused to go in a police vehicle. He wanted to walk to the jail. Finally, the police had to give in. We walked to the jail. Gilkar sahib was lodged in Barrack No 3. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad came to see Gilkar. He paid respects and enquired about his health. A few days later, Sher-e-Kashmir also came and urged Gilkar to join his government. Gilkar ridiculed his offer by saying, 'what nonsense are you talking?' Angered Sher-e-Kashmir responded: 'I will make an iron wall at Uri. You will lick it like Yajooz and Majooz. Forget plebiscite and join my government'."

Gilkar was released after 13 months on January 13, 1949 and was pushed back into Pakistan in exchange for Brigadier Gansara Singh. While Gilkar was in prison, Sardar Ibrahiem re-founded Azad Kashmir on October 24, 1947. No explanation has been given till date for re-founding a state that had come into being on October 4.

October 17 or 27?

October 1947 witnessed hectic diplomatic activity in New Delhi and Karachi (then capital of Pakistan) and military movement in Jammu Kashmir which was still silent on the issue of accession.

Contrary to common belief Indian troops entered Kashmir on 17 October, that is, 10 days before October 27.

It all started on October 12. Pakistan government sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Jammu Kashmir, Meher Chand Mahajan, to inform him about "large number of villages (in Poonch) that can be seen burning from Murree Hills", pointing out that as "Pakistan army obtains large number of recruits from Poonch" situation is "fraught with danger" to "friendly relations that Pakistan wishes to retain with Kashmir". The message also seeks restoring order and discipline of Maharaja's troops. Mahajan, in his reply of October 15 complains of infiltration from Pakistan and states that his government is "prepared to have impartial inquiry into the whole affair to remove misunderstandings and restore cordial relations".

Mahajan followed his message with a telegram to Quaid-e-Azam on October 18 stating that if Pakistan's "extremely unfriendly acts" do not stop, Maharaja's government "will be justified in asking for friendly assistance". Reply of Foreign Minister of Pakistan categorically denies Mahajan's allegations; points out "exodus of Muslims" from border areas of the State, and adds: "We are astonished to hear your threat to ask for assistance from an outside power" with the

object of completing "the process of suppressing the Muslims to enable you to join India as coup d'état against the declared will of 85 per cent of population of your State." The message warns of "gravest consequences" if measures toward that end are not "stopped". Finally, message states that Pakistan government appreciates suggestion of an impartial inquiry and asks Mahajan "immediately to nominate your representative on the Enquiry Committee" whereupon "Pakistan government will nominate its representatives without delay so that the Committee can proceed at once with a thorough inquiry into the whole matter."

Mahajan hinted at seeking "friendly assistance" which had actually already arrived a day earlier on October 17. A battalion of Patiala State Forces reached Srinagar on October 17. It took positions around Srinagar airfield and reinforced Maharaja's garrison in Jammu.

The Battalion was sighted by Lt. General L.P. Sen a few days after the Indian troops landed in Srinagar on October 27 in Budgam district. Sen was delighted to sight the soldiers and took them under his control immediately (*Slender was the thread* by Lt. General LP Sen).

The positioning of the troops unveils a conspiracy. How did Maharaja and Mahajan know that Srinagar airfield would be of vital importance in the coming days? Surprisingly, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had an exclusive meeting with the Maharaja on October 16, a day before the troops entered Kashmir. What transpired between the two is also not known. Some people say Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spent most of October 1947 in New Delhi as Nehru's guest. But facts about those eventful days have started coming to surface now. Who knew about Nehru's secret (nocturnal) visit to Kashmir a few days before Indian army landed in Kashmir? It was Late Jagat Mohini, originally from Lahore and popularly known as "Mummy" in Srinagar, who disclosed it in an interview in

2007.

The Maharaja also anticipated danger to his garrison at Jammu. Did he know he would have to run away from Kashmir in the coming days? These questions still remain unanswered.

Maharaja shocked

October 22, is an important date in Kashmir history. On this day in 1947, the Maharaja received the shock of his life. The Muslim soldiers of 4 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles revolted, killed their commander, senior officers, colleagues and captured Muzaffarabad.

The rebels were soon joined by a group of around 3000 tribesmen from "areas not under Pakistan's regular administration." Brandishing light weapons, they captured whole of Muzaffarabad.

The tribesmen were commanded by Anwar Shah. Although lacking armored transport, they rapidly advanced towards Srinagar destroying the Maharaja's army and other symbols (government buildings etc.) of autocratic rule enroute.

Historians have given different reasons for the mutiny and the sneaking of tribesmen into state territory. Most of them believe that the tribesmen and the Maharaja's erstwhile Muslim soldiers indulged in loot, arson and murder. But, there are some who have the guts to admit the truth. They believe the mutiny was inspired by the heroic resistance of freedom fighters in Poonch. And, the tribesmen, according to them, came to fulfil a promise which they had made to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah when he was hosted by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in his native land in 1937.

History reveals that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was taken along by Nehru to attend an important session of the Congress in Soba Sarhad in 1937. There he came across Khan Abdul

Gaffer Khan who hosted him for a couple of weeks. During his stay with Gaffer Khan, Sheikh Abdullah narrated the woeful tale of Kashmiris to the Pathans. The Pathans promised him help against Maharaja at an "appropriate time."

Kashmiris have been accused of betraying the freedom fighters and the tribesmen. But, a peep into Kashmir history narrates a different story. The Kashmiris received them amid chanting of pro-freedom slogans and extended full cooperation to them. However, a National Conference worker and a condemned cycle thief, Maqbool Sherwani played truant and was duly punished at Baramulla.

Of course Sheikh Abdullah's activists armed with wooden (toy) guns would roam in Srinagar to warn the tribesmen of dire consequences in case they did not leave Kashmir immediately. They were commonly called *Khuftan Fakirs* and would chant *Hamlaawar hooshiar, Hum Kashmiri hain taiyaar* (beware raiders; Kashmiris are ready to teach you a lesson). Surprisingly the *Khuftan Fakir* force had a women wing as well. Some of them were also sent to what now constitutes the Line of Control to "encourage" the Indian soldiers.

Maharaja seeks assistance

After the fall of Muzaffarabad, the scared Maharaja sent his deputy Prime Minister, R.L. Batra to New Delhi with the request for large scale military assistance. He was categorically told not to offer accession of the state to Indian Union unless insisted by the Government of India.

It is believed that Maharaja's deputy Prime Minister failed to strike a deal. A dejected Hari Singh sent Prime Minister, Meharchand Mahajan to New Delhi.

Mahajan called on Jawahar Lal Nehru at his Yark Road residence. According to *Aatish-e-Chinar*, Sheikh Abdullah was also there and helped Mahajan in striking a deal. Sheikh Abdullah narrates the conversation on page 417 of his book: "Sign the instrument of accession, give us army and confer whatever powers you like on the National Conference but fly your troops to Srinagar today otherwise I will knock at the doors of Mohammad Ali Jinnah", Mahajan told Nehru.

Nehru got angry and told Mahajan to go to Jinnah. Leaving a stunned Mahajan in the room, Nehru walked out. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was present in another room pacified Nehru. "Please do not get angry at this crucial juncture. We have to act now otherwise it will be too late."

Sheikh Abdullah also informed Nehru that National Conference supported Mahajan's views. After listening to Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru cooled down and came back to give the "good news" to Mahajan. Acknowledging Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's help, Mahajan later wrote: "I am highly thankful to Sheikh Sahib for his help at the crucial juncture. He saved Kashmir from going to Pakistan."

Nehru's clandestine visit

Nehru undertook the Kashmir journey three (some say four times) times before 1947.

The first visit in 1916 was insignificant. Second time he visited the Kashmir valley on Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's invite in 1945. The third visit could not materialize initially because the Dogra monarch, Hari Singh did not allow him to enter Jammu Kashmir. Nehru wanted to appear as a defense counsel for Sheikh Abdullah following his arrest after launching the Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946. This is what the people know. And what they do not know was unveiled by Dr. Jagat Mohini during an exclusive interview with the author a year before her death. According to her, Nehru landed on Kashmir soil either on October 25 or 26, 1947. He was accompanied by India's first home minister, V.B. Patel.

Dr. Jagat Mohini, 84, popularly known as Mummy in Srinagar was born and educated at Lahore. Her parents wanted to get her married in a well off Punjabi family. But, Mohini, having just completed her MBBS wanted to serve the poor and the destitute, turned down many a proposal. A family friend informed them about a Srinagar based doctor, Umkar Nath whose first wife, Rattan Rani had recently expired. Mohini gave her consent and this is how she landed in Kashmir. The marriage was solemnized during the fateful days of 1947. Dr. Umkar Nath was a political activist. The National Conference workers called him Pakistani Batta (Pakistani Pandit).

Communal clashes broke out in the whole of the sub-continent following partition of India. Massive migrations

took place on both sides of the Redcliff Line. Mohini's parents also had to migrate from Lahore. They entered the State of Jammu Kashmir via Kohala and stayed for a few days with their daughter. The Government of India arranged special aircrafts for lifting the refugees to various parts of India. Dr. Umkar Nath went to see off his mother-in-law to the airfield. In wee hours next morning, a jeep came to a screeching halt outside their Mandir Bagh residence. Dr. Umkar Nath entered and what he narrated to his wife unveils an unexplored chapter of Kashmir history.

He told his wife: "After seeing off your mother, I saw G.M. Sadiq talking to a group of persons. As you know Sadiq is a good friend of mine, I approached him and was surprised to see Jawahar Lal Nehru, V.B. Patel and Maharaja Hari Singh involved in a serious discussion with him. Neither Sadiq nor anybody else objected to my presence. Patel told Nehru he was not doing the right thing. Nehru told him Sheikh Abdullah was secular and we must help him. The meeting ended. It was 4 am and I requested Sadiq to drop me at my place. On the way to Srinagar, Sadiq told me we had signed an agreement and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah will take over the government."

Dr. Mohini did not remember the exact date of this extraordinary meeting. "It was either 25 or 26 of October", she said

Legality of accession

Before commenting on the legality of the accession of Jammu Kashmir to India, it is necessary to know of the day when the Maharaja ran away from Srinagar. Three books written by the most important persons of those times give conflicting versions.

Dr. Karan Singh's autobiography says on page 86 that the Maharaja was in Srinagar on October 26. "The hostility between my father and the Kashmiri leaders was greatly heightened by the fact that his move to Jammu on the night of 27 October, 1947 in the wake of tribal invasion (on the insistent advice of V.P. Menon) was seized upon by the Sheikh to attack and malign him in bitter and brutal fashion."

However, on page 58 he says the exodus took place late at night on October 25. Karan Singh later became the first Sader-e-Riyasat of Jammu Kashmir.

Similarly the man at the helm of affairs then, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah also seems ignorant of the important date. On pages 416/417 of his *Aatish-e-Chinar* he writes, "Maharaja was very much tired on his arrival in Jammu on October 26. He went to bed and directed his staff to awaken him only when V.P. Menon comes from New Delhi. His arrival shall convey that India has accepted my request for accession. If he does not come, shoot me with my pistol."

However, on page 409, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah writes, "On October 26, the invaders destroyed the power station at Mahore and the Capital plunged into darkness. People say when Rome was burning the king was playing his flute. Similarly Hari Singh was receiving gifts from his couturiers

on the occasion of Dussereha in his palace Darbar Garh, Srinagar."

Sheikh Abdullah repeats the mistake on page 411. He writes, "While the invaders were looting and killing people, the Maharaja led a caravan of more than one hundred vehicles to Jammu on October 25. He was accompanied by his close relatives and Queen Tara Devi. Hari Singh also took the golden idol of his family temple along."

The third book is: *Looking Back*, written by the then Prime Minister of Jammu Kashmir, Maher Chand Mahajan. On page 151 he writes: "Mr. Menon and I suggested to him that he should leave for Jammu as soon as possible as the situation may demand his personal negotiations with India. For this purpose it would be more convenient if he were in Jammu than in Srinagar. Eventually he was persuaded to leave Srinagar at about 2 am on the 26th morning."

Mahajan gives the vital information on pages 152, 153 and 154. "The cabinet meeting in the evening affirmed the decision of the Defence Council to give military aid to the Maharaja to drive out the tribesmen. Around dinner time, the Prime Minister sent a message to me that with Mr. V.P. Menon I should fly to Jammu to inform the Maharaja of this decision and also to get his signature on certain supplementary documents about the accession. I frankly informed him that I was not prepared to go to Jammu till I get news from my aerodrome officer at Srinagar that the Indian forces had landed there. Panditji did not insist and said, "You can fly to Jammu next morning."

Mahajan says on page 154: "In the early hours of the morning of the 27th, I could hear the noise of the planes flying over Sardar Baldev Singh's house and carrying military personnel to Srinagar. At about 9 am I got a message from the aerodrome officer at Srinagar that troops had landed there and had gone into action. On receipt of this message, I flew to Jammu with

Mr. V.P. Menon."

On the same page he further says: "Mr. Menon and myself met his Highness. After some discussion, formal documents were signed which Menon took back to New Delhi while I stayed at Jammu."

So Mr. V.P. Menon was in Delhi on October 26 and flew to Jammu the next morning (October 27). Who signed the instrument of accession at Jammu on October 26?

An UNI report dated October 28, 1999 while giving details of a seminar, says that Dr. Karan Singh was a witness to the signing of the instrument of accession. Dr. Karan Singh did not contest the UNI news for obvious reasons and the confusion continues to this day.

Surprisingly, Karan Singh in his address did not claim to be a witness to the signing of the instrument of accession. Instead, he said, "It was in my presence that the Maharaja ordered Brigadier Rajender Singh to stop the Intruders till the Indian army arrived."

Political activists whom I interviewed believe that the Maharaja only shifted his treasury to Jammu on October 25.

Two friends die

They dared deadly guns during the Second World War and helped their colleagues survive bullets. Impressed by the bravery of Ghulam Qadir Wani of Maisuma, Srinagar, a Sikh soldier from Punjab, Ranjit Roy called on him and hugged him. They became friends and exchanged their watches as a memento of their love for each other. The war ended and both of them rushed to their respective places.

On October 27, 1947 when the Indian troops landed in Srinagar, some persons believed to be National Conference workers went to Rambagh to greet them. Ghulam Qadir Wani was also present there. The Indian soldiers fired at them killing 11 persons including Ghulam Qadir Wani. The soldiers commanded by Ranjit Roy, who had now become a Lt. Colonel stopped near the bridge for some time. Roy ordered a soldier to get him a cup of tea. When the soldier served the tea, Roy had a good look at his watch. He became curious and questioned him. "Where did you get this watch from?" The soldier replied, "This is my watch sir." Roy could not take more of it. "This is my watch. I gave it to my friend during the war. Tell me the truth or I kill you", he shouted. The scared soldier narrated the truth. "We killed some persons a short while ago. I removed this watch from the arm of one of the deceased", he informed the curious Roy.

Tears rolled down his cheeks. "Where is the body? Take me there immediately", Roy yelled at him. One look at the face of the deceased and he turned hysterical. He cried like a woman. After hurling a few abuses on the soldier he sat down and

cursed his soldiers.

Meanwhile, Qadir's relatives came to take the body. Roy gave them a vehicle and accompanied them to Maisuma. Qadir's body was taken to Haji Masjid for the final bath. Roy removed his shoes, entered the mosque and participated in the ritual. He was sobbing all the time. Finally when Qadir's coffin was taken to the graveyard at Dal Gate for burial, Roy accompanied the bereaved and stayed at the graveyard till his friend was laid to rest.

On his return from the graveyard, he talked about his deceased friend. "We survived the bullets during the war. I had never imagined that my own soldiers will kill my friend", he said and left.

The same day, Roy left for Baramulla. In a fierce battle with the "Azad forces", he got killed.

Lt. General L.P. Sen in his book, *Slender was the Thread*, says the firing incident took place in November. According to him, it was an accident. However, local historians and the elder brother of Ghulam Qadir Wani say with authority that the incident took place on October 27. The death of Roy at Baramulla on October 27 confirms it.

Sen scolds Sher-e-Kashmir

When Indian troops landed in Srinagar on October 27, 1947, the National Conference workers headed by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad provided them vehicles and vital information about the tribesmen. Brigadier L.P. Sen who commanded the troops has acknowledged their contribution in his book: *Slender was the thread*. But on November 4, 1947 when Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad called on him in his headquarters, he scolded them and ordered them out. The "lion" and his deputy left hurriedly without offering any resistance.

On November 4, 1947, Sardar Patel and Sardar Baldev (the Defence Minister) arrived in the Kashmir valley to have an on the spot assessment of the situation. They rushed to Brigadier L.P. Sen's headquarters to know about the military operation that had been launched in the wee hours on October 27. Brigadier Sen apprised them of the situation and sought additional troops and artillery which was promised and sent in a couple of days.

The head of the emergency government, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his deputy, Ghulam Muhammad Bakshi accompanied Patel and Baldev Singh to the airport to see them off. On the way to Srinagar they decided to visit the Brigade headquarters. They were received by Major Kak, the liaison officer. Sher-e-Kashmir and his deputy were taken to the operations room where Major Kak explained things to them. Brigadier Sen was busy on a wireless set and had no idea of the "important" meeting in the operations room.

Contrary to common belief, Sheikh Abdullah did not have a cake walk in 1947. He faced stiff resistance not only from the Muslim Conference workers but a number of National Conference activists as well. A staunch worker of National Conference, Noor Mohammad registered protest in his unique style. He dressed like a Sadhu, went to Sher-e-Kashmir's house and said Namaskaar. Sofi was arrested, tortured and detained. On his release, he was found dead in his hotel room one day. To this day, his murder remains a mystery.

Noor Mohammad Sofi was born in the family of Abdul Qadir Sofi of Koker Bazar, Srinagar. He was fond of horse riding. He had a high breed Peshawari horse. One day when he entered the erstwhile Palladium cinema riding his horse, nobody dared to stop him. "My horse wants to enjoy the movie," he said. This incident throws light on the personality of Noor Mohammad, who was a daring, dedicated and enthusiastic worker of the National Conference. His very presence in the historic Lal Chowk would send a wave of shiver down the spines of goons, anti-social and anti-movement elements.

He took active part in the Quit Kashmir Movement of 1946. One day, he drove Mohi-ud-Din Karra from Lal Chowk to Batamaloo in a Tonga. He told Karra to cover himself with a veil. Karra looked like a woman in hijab in his Tonga. Nobody suspected that Sofi was carrying one of the most wanted persons of those times.

Meanwhile, Indian troops landed in Srinagar and Sher-e-Kashmir became the Emergency Administrator. A few months later, the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru arrived in Srinagar. He and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were scheduled to address a rally at Lal Chowk. This was where Sheikh Abdullah recited "*Man Tu Shudam Tu Man Shudi*" (I become you and you become me) to show his close proximity with Nehru.

Some people believe Noor Mohammad dressed like a Sadhu went to the podium and wished Sher-e-Kashmir in Hindi. He said "*Namaskaar*". Three-time Plebiscite Front president, Munshi Ishaq's son during an interview with the author in March 2007 said he saw Noor Mohammad in a Sadhu's attire at Lal Chowk.

Noor Mohammad was arrested and sent to Srinagar Central Jail where he met Mohammad Yusuf Khan of Muslim Conference who too was detained. Noor Mohammad narrated his story to him. "A few days after Indian troops landed in the Valley, I was informed about the abduction of two women by the troops near Budshah Bridge. I was furious but could not do anything. Finally I dressed like a typical Kashmiri Pandit and called on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in wee hours. He was offering prayers. He was annoyed to see me. I left and called on Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. He hugged me and wept. He said, 'Sheikh has sold us. Please do not kill yourself now like this. We cannot do anything'".

Sofi started wishing his friends and acquaintances in typical Hindu style. "*Namaskaar*, how are you," he would say with folded hands. Munshi Ishaq's son must have seen him during those days. When a person known to him asked him why he was roaming around in a Sadhu's attire, he said: "I am doing what our leader will make us do after 25 years. He has sold us cheap." Sofi then managed to hold a protest rally against the accession in the

Lal Chowk itself. The National Conference workers watched helplessly.

Sofi was released after some time, but had been severely tortured in the prison. His 13 year old daughter, Zoona, saw some torture marks on his back after his release. Narrating an incident, Zoona said, "He did not tell us about his experiences in prison. But, the torture marks on his body narrated it clearly." She smiled when asked about her father's saffron attire. "Yes, he dressed like a Sadhu in those eventful times. We were shocked and surprised but nobody dared to stop him. He behaved like a Sadhu for quite some time", she said.

Zoona does not remember his date of death. He was 'murdered' while Yusuf Khan was still in prison. He heard the news of his death in jail. The death, therefore, took place in 1948. Dr. Atri did not rule out poisoning as cause of death. Paying glowing tributes to Sofi's memory, Yusuf during an interview with the author said: "Sofi was a staunch National Conference worker but he died a martyr. He was brave and daring. Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg liked him for his bravery."

November 6:

A survivor's account

Although the city of temples was reddened with blood on November 6, 1947, the people apprehended trouble in far off places like Katra much before. Those who left in time survived. Others were consumed by the communal flare that engulfed the entire region. A survivor narrated his daring escape from Katra.

Mohammad Shafi Malik was in the 9th standard when his father Husain Bakish of Katra told him to get ready to say good bye to their native land. Malik said: "We lived in total harmony with our Hindu brethren till October 1947. One night people suddenly started beating drums. They urged the people to get ready to fight the invaders who had entered Muzaffarabad. Amid this drum beating and provocative sloganeering, the age old bonds of love and friendship broke. People started hating each other."

Before leaving Katra, Malik's father gathered the valuables and dumped them in a room. "The house was then rented to a police officer and our family comprising 40 persons ran away for our lives. We reached Batote and sought refuge in a relative's house. But, my father did not feel secure at Batote. He wanted to reach the Muslim majority area of Banihal. One day when he arranged a few tongas (horse driven carts), the trouble started. Some miscreants opened fire in the market and we ran towards the forest. We reached Gool where we stayed with my uncle for a while. But, as ill luck would have it, we were forced to run away from there as well. We somehow wanted to reach Banihal but the roaring Chenab proved a

big stumbling block. There was only one rope bridge in the area and a Hindu guarded it all the time. We could not cross the river without his help", said Malik.

Husain Bakish pulled himself together in this critical moment. He wanted to go to a nearby Hindu village for help. But, nobody was ready to accompany him. Finally, a few persons agreed to go with him. "The entire village was deserted. My father looked for the Numberdaar (village head). He was sitting in his room with a revenue official and a local Hindu with their naked swords lying nearby. The moment my father entered, they stood up and wanted to attack them. But, my father managed to speak. He convinced them that he was unarmed and had come to seek their help. He was allowed in. After half an hour, the Numberdaar agreed to help him in lieu of a handsome consideration. My father had 400 rupees in his pocket. He gave them to the Numberdaar", he said.

The ill fated family saw the Numberdaar and Husain Bakish coming towards them and heaved a sigh of relief. But, when they came closer, they saw the Numberdaar and his associates walking with naked swords behind Husain Bakish. They got scared and ran away. However, after listening to Husain Bakish they came out. The Numberdaar eyed the ornaments the women were wearing. In a jiffy, the women handed over their ornaments to him. Pleased with the kitty, the Numberdaar smiled for the first time. But, he wanted someone from the family to accompany him to other side of the bridge to talk to the Hindus there.

"A man went with him. They took more than an hour to return. The delay frightened the family once again. All of them ran away. This time my father also ran away but did not forget to take me along. We waited in the forest till the Numberdaar returned. One by one he took us to other side of the bridge. The person guarding the bridge cut its ropes when

the last person crossed the bridge", Malik said.

The family finally entered the valley from Kulgam. Husain Bakish's family settled in Srinagar. Malik later completed his education and sought employment in the revenue department. He has now retired and lives with his family at Humhama. Two years ago his sister passed away and was laid to rest at Magarmal Bagh graveyard. She always remembered her native village, friends and relatives.

Malik who survived the journey to the Kashmir valley narrated the story of his relatives from Udhampur. The entire family was wiped out. Two minor girls, Rehmat Begum and Iqbal Begum, survived the onslaught.

Malik is all praise for Advocate Lala Jagar Nath who took the minor girls into his custody and travelled all the way to Srinagar to ensure their safety. In Srinagar, the girls were handed over to their relatives. Iqbal Begum died a few years ago. Rehmat Begum is alive and lives with her family at Haft Chinar.

Paying rich tributes to the memory of Lala Jagar Nath, Malik said: "The noble lawyer saved hundreds of Muslims during those fateful days."

Militancy commenced

Those who believe militancy was introduced in 1989 are mistaken. Kashmiris started getting arms training immediately after the partition of the sub-continent. In 1948, a militant outfit, Hyderi Column was launched. Jehangir Khan of Bagh-e-Mehtab was one of the founders of this outfit. Very few people know about the role of this valiant soldier of Kashmir. However, the noted historian, Rashid Taseer makes a detailed mention of Jehangir in his *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir*, Vol. 4 page 133.

According to Taseer, "The outfit (Hyderi Column) was launched by people from across the cease-fire line. Arms and ammunition were smuggled into the valley through Raja Ahsen and Raja Ataullah of Zachaldara. Jehangir was also made its member. For some time he remained silent. Meanwhile, an ex-serviceman, Jalal, was entrusted the job of imparting training to the members of the outfit. The police came to know about some ammunition dumped at Zachaldara through one Muhammad Husain, and Ahsan and Ataullah were arrested. The police also came to know about arms and ammunition stored in the house of Brigadier Rehmatullah Khan of Doodh Pathri. Khan wrote a letter to Jehangir urging him to facilitate Jalal's border cross. He took him to Pakistan administered Kashmir and handed him over to the Pakistan army. The army officer who received them was highly impressed by Jehangir's courage and conviction. He requested him to get all the members of Hyderi Column to Azad Kashmir. He crossed the border several times in this connection. When

Ataullah Khan's house was searched at Dood Pathri, Jehangir Khan and other members of the outfit were there. However, they evaded arrest and went across the border."

According to family sources, Jehangir was implicated in the Kashmir Conspiracy Case along with Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. "It was a false charge as Jehangir was in detention during those days for dumping arms and ammunition at Reyar", they said.

Jehangir never made mention of the inhuman torture he was subjected to in interrogation centres. It was only after his release that family members saw marks of torture on his body. "The government tried its best to persuade Jehangir to be a witness against Sheikh Abdullah but he refused. This only added to his woes but he did not succumb", said the family sources.

Jehangir remained in perpetual detention. One of the cases against him was filed on June 23, 1964 under Section 3, Enemy Agents Ordinance, 2005 (1948 AD). The case was finally dismissed on May 30, 1968.

When Sheikh Abdullah signed the infamous Indira- Abdullah Accord in 1975, he urged Jehangir to accompany him in his new pursuit. Jehangir flatly refused and termed his new posture as the beginning of *Awaragardi* (waywardness) rather than *Izzat-o-Aabru ka Muqaam* (Respectability).

Jehangir passed away on April 14, 1997. He was laid to rest at Bagh-e-Mehtab.

Flash Back

Sheikh rescues Indian delegation

On January 1, 1948, the Government of India lodged a formal complaint with the United Nations accusing Pakistan of aggression in "Indian territory". The complaint made clear that the Government of India was committed to allow people of Jammu Kashmir to exercise their option once the Kashmir valley was cleared off the invader.

Gopalaswamy Ayyanger represented India in the world body. He presented his case in the following words: "The question whether she (Kashmir) should withdraw her accession to India and either accede to Pakistan or remain independent with a right to claim admission as a member of the United Nations - all this we have recognized to be a matter of unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir."

The Indian delegation, however, was not satisfied with the response of the Security Council members and sought suspension of proceedings expressing dissatisfaction with the trend in the Council. Council members, Philip Noel-Baker of Britain and Warren Austin of the United States registered strong protest. They said: "It seems the Indian representative wants us to take a position which would amount to that of an ally in the war and allow India to finish the job by force against the tribesmen. This is the very last position which the Council ought to take."

It was at this stage that Nehru's most trusted lieutenant, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came to New Delhi's rescue. Sheikh Abdullah narrates in his *Aatish-e-Chinar* (page 478): "After weeks of scolding, the Indian delegation desperately

wanted someone to reply to the Council members in a strong tone. "My colleagues were greatly pleased with my speech. After the session concluded the Russian representative, Malik Yaqoub congratulated me. My colleagues also congratulated me. My speech was discussed for several days." Pertinent to mention that at no point does Sheikh Abdullah admit he used "undiplomatic" language during his speech (page 478).

On page 479, Sheikh Abdullah gives an account of his meeting with Noel-Baker. "He made me wait for quite some time. I got angry and decided to leave. But the door opened and Baker came out. We met and exchanged heated arguments. He told me Pakistan was not involved in the tribal invasion. I did not agree and told him how he could have a correct assessment of the situation when he was physically far away from the battle field. The meeting ended at an angry note. I apprised Ayyanger of the developments."

First jail break

Ghulam Naqui was born to Kazim Ali of Zadibal in 1924. According to his elder brother, Ghulam Rasool Alamgeer, Naqui was very sharp and fond of horse riding. He had his initial schooling from Imamia School (Zadibal) and graduated from Amar Singh College, Srinagar. He wanted to move to Aligarh to pursue a degree in law. His parents, however, denied him permission. Determined to go to Aligarh University, Naqui stole some money from his house, wrote a note for his parents seeking pardon for stealing the money and left for Aligarh along with his friend Ali Muhammad Vakil.

When the duo returned from Aligarh, the first war between India and Pakistan was going on. An underground organization was launched, which attracted hundreds of youth. They were trained in handling and use of arms. According to Rashid Taseer's, *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir* (Vol. 4, page 132), the organization was named Hyderi Column.

However, information about the organization reached the police and a few members were arrested. Naqui and Ali Muhammad Advocate (son of Muhammad Saber of Maisuma) were also taken into custody. Both were awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment. However, they managed to escape from jail.

Naqui describes the incident in his *brief autobiography*:

"It was early 1951 when we thought of escaping from the jail, since we were left with no hope of release from jail. During the

period we were not given special classes. We were allotted work in the workshop and weaving department of the jail. During this period we brought out a rod of soft steel, some one meter in length. We kept it in an abandoned bathroom in our compartment hidden under the firewood, which we were given for heating up the quarter stove of our room. We actually used the stove to convert the iron bar into a hook. During the night when all the windows were closed we would heat up the rod in the middle and bend it on the steel fencing of the iron bed. We bent the rod in the middle to give it a U-shape. We then turned its ends to the size of a standard brick used on the top of the boundary wall of the jail. We gave it another bend and made it of a fork type hook with its ends turned to fit the roof bricks of the main boundary wall. Our room was the only portion of the lengthy barrack, which had a first floor. A staircase, which opened on the front of barrack and led to the upper story, was always locked and its keys were in safe custody with the jail Superintendent. The upper most rung of the staircase joined the ceiling of the abandoned bathroom of our compartment. We un-nailed the upper wing planks of the bathroom ceiling by using the trowel and transplanter, which we had been provided by the jail authorities to plant flower beds in the compound of our barracks. We removed the nails from the planks and put them back in place. It was early April 1951 when we decided that it was the ripe time to attempt the escape. March and April are the spring season in Kashmir. This period of the year witnesses heavy rainfall in the Vale. We were awaiting a day when it would be raining continuously as this would facilitate our plan. The security in the jail was not up to the mark. There was a gallow structure in the outer compound. The wardens were always scared of it and would say that the ghost of the convicts who had been hung there visit the place during the night. They would not, therefore, stay for the whole period of

their duty (three hours) in the compound, especially when only one warden would be on duty. The rains would, all the more, be contributing to relaxation of the wardens on duty. On April 19, 1951, Wednesday, it rained from morning till midnight and we prepared ourselves to escape at 9 pm. We brought out the hook from its hiding place, tied the ropes to it, and also wrapped bandages, with pieces of cloth, around it to avoid any sound when it would touch the wall. We waited till 12:30 midnight and ensured that the only warden who was on duty had checked the window bars of our room and after having a round of the compound, went to have a smoke in the inner verandah of the hospital of the jail. Since, we were now 3 years in jail we had thoroughly observed the movements of the wardens during night especially during the period of midnight to 3 am. They were quite lax and would not stay at their place of duty in the rear compound. We were even familiar with the sound the various iron gates of the prison produced when they used to be shut or opened. At night even the sound of the locks when checked to ensure they were shut could be heard from our room.

At about 1:00 am, we ascended to the first floor of our compartment through the upper wing of the bathroom ceiling. The upper room, which used to serve as the office of the manager of the jail printing press, had two windows opening towards the rear compound of the jail. These windows had only glass panes and no iron bars or grills. We shut one of the lids of one of the window and bolted it leaving the other lid open for escape. The window was just at a height of ten feet from the compound. We put through one place of rope prepared from our bed sheets through the pane less opening of the window thus getting down on the floor of the compound. Both of us descended into the compound perspiring profusely despite the down pour. Covering a distance of approximately thirty to forty yards up to the boundary wall,

we threw the hook on the wall. It did not, however, stick two to three times. At last we threw it with a silent cry of "Ya Ali" and it got stuck to the top of the wall, approximately 22 feet high. My companion pulled it and ensured that it had stuck properly. He climbed the wall meticulously taking no serious effort to reach the top of the wall. He lay down on the top of the wall to provide me ample time to climb. I then caught hold of the rope and ascended with comfortable ease and came down in the open on the other side of the wall. My companion also came down. We found ourselves just near the lunatic asylum situated on the outskirts of the jail. As the hook had stuck to the top brackets of the wall we gave it a jerk and it came down leaving no traces behind. We were bare footed and had tied our shoes to the other end of the rope. We collected the hook and put on our shoes and coats."

Mujahid-e-Millat dies

Contrary to common belief that Pandit Nehru, Gaffar Gandhi and Maulana Azad received a rousing reception in Srinagar during a boat rally from Chattabal to Amira Kadal in the mid 40's, the Congress and National Conference leaders were actually greeted with brickbats in old Srinagar.

According to Muhammad Maqbool Mir, 80, a resident of Muma Khan (Kathi Darwaza), the people led by Muslim Conference workers pelted stones, worn out shoes and garbage on the Indian leaders from both the banks of Jhelum. "The public also chanted slogans against the Congress and National Conference. The protest gained momentum near Musa Ghat at Zaina Kadal. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was enraged. He ordered his most trusted lieutenant, Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi to teach the protestors a lesson. Bakshi stopped his boat near the ghat and in a jiffy called his supporters. They were armed with knives, axes, shovels and bamboo sticks. The armed men wreaked havoc in the area. Scores of persons got injured. The Muslim Conference General Secretary, Qureshi Muhammad Yusuf and a senior leader, Muhammad Ismail Sagar who rushed to the spot to take stock of the situation were roughed up. Yusuf sustained serious injuries and had to be hospitalized," he said.

Another active worker of the Muslim Conference, Mohammad Yusuf Khan said: "The National Conference goons led by Bakshi killed a civilian, Salam Darzi. The blame for murdering Darzi was put on Abdul Salam Dalal. Dalal was arrested and put on trial. He was later acquitted of the charge by the High Court."

Other contemporaries of Abdul Salam Dalal who preferred to remain anonymous speak highly of him. "The fact that the blame of murder was put on Dalal speaks volumes about his towering personality. He had resisted the NC onslaught tooth and nail and was, therefore, their worst enemy. His resistance to Dogra autocracy won him the Mujahid-e-Millat title."

Dalal spent many years in prison. The prolonged detention adversely affected his studies. He could not complete his graduation. According to Professor Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Shah of Hathi Khan, Dalal had a firm faith in God. "One day when he was hiding in a safe house offered by the Vakils of Zaina Kadal, the police stormed the area. Dalal jumped from the window and sustained internal injuries in his intestines. He never recovered. He was admitted in the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh hospital where soda bicarbonate was administered to him in huge quantities," he said.

Dalal passed away at the age of 36 on May 13, 1951. A large gathering witnessed his funeral with tearful eyes at Rozbal, Khanyar graveyard.

Political Conference takes birth

The 1947 arrangement did not suit many a dissident. Hundreds were exterminated and many others jailed. The Muslim Conference almost died down. A group of persons formed the Political Conference on June 19, 1953 and sought complete merger of Jammu Kashmir with Pakistan. The newly launched organization had several non-Muslims as its members.

According to Shabnam Qayoom, the founder of Political Conference, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Karra had truck with Pandit Nehru. In April 1953 he approached Nehru through Jamna Das and promised to dilute the special status of Jammu Kashmir if he was given the Prime Ministership. However, Nehru refused to oblige him. Soon after Karra began to look towards Pakistan and finally launched the Political Conference at Sehgar, Safakadal on June 19 of the same year.

However, the first Secretary of Political Conference, Muhammad Amin Nehvi Advocate, rejects this as ridiculous. Nehvi during an exclusive interview with the author said: "Political Conference was an organization of dedicated and committed people and its members offered huge sacrifices to keep alive the struggle."

The entire leadership including Karra, Advocate Latif Qureshi, Muhammad Amin Nehvi and others were taken into custody a day after the Political Conference was formed. The arrestees included Muhammad Sultan Khan alias Sule Galdaar a staunch National Conference worker who also was Sheikh Abdullah's trumpet blower.

Ghulam Ahmad Mir was another important leader. He was the

first to detect the leaks in the Political Conference. On March 7, 1964, Mir while addressing a function in connection with the self-determination day said: "Karra has deviated from the party stand and has, therefore, lost his right to represent the organization." He also lashed out at other "turn coats". (*Srinagar Times*, March 18, 1964).

Mir's apprehensions came true in 1977 when Karra joined the Janata Party. Karra's "misadventure" shocked another founder member of the organization, Raghunath Vaishnavi. He retired from politics but the concern for bleeding Kashmir remained in his heart till he breathed his last. To bring solace to his mauled soul, Vaishnavi would wake up early in the morning, pick up a bag of flower saplings and plant the same in the houses of strangers.

Flash Back

Outside Udhampur jail

On June 19, 1953, Sher-e-Kashmir's close associates launched a new party. The new party believed in total merger of Jammu Kashmir into Pakistan. On June 20, all the leaders of the party were arrested and lodged in Udhampur jail. The detained leaders included Mohi-ud-Din Karra and Muhammad Sultan Khan alias Sule Galdaar.

Sultan Khan was Sher-e-Kashmir's trumpet blower during the Quit Kashmir movement. Galdaar in Kashmir, means a person who deals in food grains. If used in a negative sense, it means a person with a high pitched voice. Khan was not a dealer in food grains, however, he had a "big mouth" and this particular quality won him the name Galdaar. He was a full time worker and remained at the disposal of his beloved leader day in and day out.

During the Quit Kashmir Movement, Sule Galdaar would board a tonga (a horse driven cart) and roam around the city. He would deliver fiery speeches, warning Maharaja Hari Singh of dire consequences in case he did not leave Kashmir immediately.

Sher-e-Kashmir and others including Sule Galdaar were arrested in 1946. Sheikh Abdullah and others were released following interference of some Indian leaders including Gandhi. However, Maharaja Hari Singh sought a written apology which was readily given.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah became the Emergency Administrator in October 1947. Sule Galdaar went to his official residence to congratulate him. However, the guards

posted outside stopped him. Angered, he told the guard to inform Sher-e-Kashmir of his arrival.

On his return, the guard gave Galdaar the shock of his life. "Sheikh Sahib is busy. He has directed you to meet him in his office tomorrow." The shocked Galdaar left perhaps cursing himself for the only mistake he had committed in his life.

He never called on Sheikh Abdullah again. On June 9, 1953 when the Political Conference was launched, Sule Galdaar became its active member. Prior to its launch, Galdaar did what he was best at. He hired a tonga and announced the proposed launch of the new organization. He even went to the Civil Secretariat and gave Sheikh Abdullah and his former colleagues some tough moments.

On August 9, 1953 Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and arrested. For a few hours he was kept outside the Udampur jail. When Sule Galdaar came to know about the presence of Sheikh Abdullah, he became restless. "What is wrong with you," Mohi-ud-Din Karra, according to Advocate Muhammad Amin Nehvi, asked him. "I am searching for a stick. I want to go out and beat Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah," he replied. It took the leaders quite some time to pacify him.

Flash Back

Independent State

In 1953 an important case, *Magher Singh v/s State of Jammu and Kashmir* (AIR 1953, J and K 25 Vol. 40. C.N.17) was heard by a Division Bench of the State High Court. The bench comprising Chief Justice Janki Nath Wazir and Justice Shahmiri gave a landmark judgment. The bench laid down that Jammu Kashmir was an independent state from August 14 to October 26, 1947.

The appellant, Magher Singh, prayed for a declaration that the Jammu Kashmir Big Landed Estates (Abolition) Act was ultra vires to the powers of Shree Yuvraj and, therefore, in spite of the passage of this act, the plaintiff continues to be the lawful owner of 811 kanals of land situated in villages Kadyal and Kotli Arjun Singh tehsil Ranbirsingh Pora of district Jammu. The counsel for the appellant agitated the following points to prove his claim:

- a) His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu Kashmir was not an absolute sovereign and therefore he could not entrust his legislation to any other person.
- b) Shri Yuvraj being a delegate of his Highness was not competent to enact the act under Section 5 of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act 1996.

Justice Shahmiri held: "In regards to the first point that his Highness the Maharaja was not an absolute sovereign, it is urged that learned counsel for the appellant that before the partition he was under the paramountcy of British crown and

after he executed the instrument of accession in favour of the dominion of India on October 26, 1947 he surrendered his part of sovereignty to the dominion of India and therefore was a limited subordinated sovereign and consequently he could not delegate his legislative authority to Shri Yuvraj".

The learned Justice explained, "While the Maharaja of Kashmir was under the paramountcy of the British Crown before the partition of India from August 15, 1947 under Section 7, Indian Independence Act (10 and 11 Geo VI Ch. 30) passed by the British parliament, Suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapsed and all functions exercised by His Majesty at that date with respect of state of Jammu and Kashmir, all obligations of His Majesty towards Jammu and Kashmir state or the ruler thereof and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date in relation to Jammu and Kashmir by treaty or otherwise lapsed and the state became an independent and sovereign state in the full sense of International law. Thus whatever limits to the sovereignty of His Highness in relation to matters coming within the sphere of paramountcy existed before August 15, 1947, these ceased to exist and His Highness became an uncontrolled and absolute sovereign even in relation to such spheres from that."

Similar views were expressed by Chief Justice Wazir. He held, "It is contended on behalf of the appellant that His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur Hari Singh was not an omnipotent sovereign but was a subordinate sovereign. His sovereignty, if any was lost after the state's accession to India....This contention is based on a misconception of the true constitutional position of His Highness...Maharaja was the fountain of all powers, executive, legislative and judicial. He possessed all the essential attributes of absolute sovereignty and his position can well be compared to the British

Parliament. A reference of Section 7 of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 will further make it clear that even the external sovereignty of His Highness reverted to him after the lapse of the paramountcy of the British crown. His Highness thus became an omnipotent sovereign after the new dominions of India and Pakistan came into existence."

Right to secede

While Nehru fooled the international community with his plebiscite promise, the Constituent Assembly was paving the way for making Jammu Kashmir an "integral part of India". All preparations for ratifying the instrument of accession had been made. On Wednesday, February 3, 1954 the report of the Basic Principles Committee and Fundamental Rights was tabled by Syed Mir Qasim with G.M. Sadiq in the chair. The report was unanimously adapted with just one exception.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Qasim stressed a need for expressing the State's relationship with the Union of India in clear and precise terms. "...While preserving internal autonomy of the state all the obligations which flow from the fact of accession and also its elaborations as contained in the Delhi Agreement should find an appropriate place in the constitution. The committee is of the opinion that it is high time that finality in this respect should be reached and the relationship of the state with the union should be expressed in clear and precise terms."

The report was discussed in detail on February 4, 5 and 6. All the members accepted and supported the report with Abdul Gani Goni being the only exception. Goni handed over his note of dissent. He wanted to retain the right to secede from the Union of India. He also expressed serious reservations on application of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to the State. He also demanded the right to recall.

The house was adjourned as Abdul Gani Goni wanted all the members to study the report in detail. The request was granted.

The house met on February 4. This is when Abdul Gani Goni delivered his historic speech. He quoted two speeches of the head of the Indian delegation in the Security Council, Sir B.N. Rau. In his speech of March 12, 1951, Rau while explaining the need for a Constituent Assembly said: "Will this Assembly give its decision on the question of accession as well? In this connection my government is of the opinion that if this Assembly so wishes it can express its opinion with regard to this problem but not give its decision."

Goni also quoted another speech of Rau dated March 29, 1951. He said: "...If the Constituent Assembly of the State wants to give its opinion on the accession question, it can do so, but this opinion of the Assembly can neither be a binding on the Government of India nor can it influence the position of the Security Council."

Goni continued his speech. He said: "What do the statements of Rau quoted above prove? It proves that while we are going ahead by one step, the Government of India does not keep pace with us. I think if we do not provide right of secession in our constitution we are thereby showing disrespect towards it. Besides Pakistan is also a party to the dispute. Our 8 lakh people are living in 'Azad Kashmir'. Therefore, the problem does not pertain to Kashmir alone. On the contrary it pertains to India, Pakistan and the Security Council also."

While justifying his demand for right to secede, Goni said: "India was not prepared to accept the finality of accession as is evident from the statements of Rau in the Security Council." He further urged the house to wait for the 8 lakh people of 'Azad Kashmir'. "If they refuse to be a part of India after joining us what shall we do? We cannot ignore their wishes. This is why right to secession becomes very important", he said.

(Inputs from Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly
Official Report, Assembly Debate, Part I, Vol. I)

Naya Kashmir Day

Abdul Gani Goni's address evoked heated discussion in the Constituent Assembly on February 5 and 6 of 1954. The members took serious note of Goni's apprehensions and did not even spare the Naya (New) Kashmir concept which had to form the basis of the State's constitution. Goni finally walked out of the House much to the comfort of the other members. He vehemently opposed the motion for ratification of Kashmir's accession to India.

After presenting his note of dissent in response to a comment made by a member, Goni said "The reports presented in the house are not only against the principles of New Kashmir but they also smack of Indian imperialist mentality. We are handing everything to the Indian union." (*Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly official report*, Vol. 1, page 739).

Goni also reminded the house of the speech in the United Nations by head of Indian delegation, B.N. Rau who while addressing the Security Council on March 29, 1951 said: "Some of the members of the Security Council fear lest the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir may give its opinion on the accession question. If the assembly wishes to give its opinion on this subject, it can do so, but this opinion of the assembly can neither be a binding on government of India nor can it be a binding on the Security Council..."

"Let us withdraw the Indian army for five days and see whom this house represents," Goni said.

His long speech, made no difference. "It seems the members

are here to nod their heads only," he said during his speech.

The way the members behaved in the House reflected their desperation vis-a-vis urgency of the task assigned to them. The cat was finally out of the bag and the "honourable" members did not mind it. This day there was no need to conceal the baggage they had been carrying for long. It lay there totally exposed on the floor of the house.

The members debated the issue and in the process severely criticized personalities ranging from Mohammad Ali Jinnah to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in his concluding address quoted statements of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg to justify ratification of the accession. He said, "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was very generous in the matter of giving statements and would issue not less than a thousand in a year. In this way he should have issued some six thousand statements during the six years of this office and if I take even a single minute for a statement I would require six thousand minutes for the task. So I would briefly quote a few statements of his."

Bakshi quoted the statement of April 12, 1952, which reads: "The decision of the people of Kashmir to accede to India was irrevocable. Under no circumstances would Kashmir lower the Gandhian flag of secular democracy."

Regarding Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah had said: "In Pakistan for instance, communalism was being openly encouraged and every opportunity taken to exploit it in Kashmir. In India the Nehru government was determined to put down communalism in every shape and form. Kashmir, which four years ago spontaneously threw its lot with India and identified itself with the secular character of that country could strengthen its bonds only if she acted prudently and took the realities of the situation into consideration."

Bakshi also quoted a statement of Beg published in Hindustan Times on April 17, 1952: "If Kashmir had gone to Pakistan the voice of 'New Kashmir' would have been strangled. Kashmir today represents not a mere territory of natural beauty. She represents a progressive movement which is directed for the common people's good. If Kashmir had acceded to Pakistan, this great movement would have received a setback for all time to come. The soul of Kashmir would have been crushed."

Bakshi also spoke about "sufferings of the people of Azad Kashmir under the feudal yoke". He concluded his speech saying, "Today is a day of fulfillment for all - a day when we finally and triumphantly assert our right to decide our own future, free from threats of force and outside dictation."

Syed Mir Qasim, the President of the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Committees, followed. He requested the house to adopt the report of the committee minus Goni's note of dissent! This was seconded by R.P. Saraf. A volley of questions was posed to Goni. He left the House. Soon after, amid thundering applause from the members, the House adopted the motion and thus ratified accession to India. When it met on February 13, Raja Muhammad Afzal Khan urged the house to include February 6 in the list of public holidays as Naya Kashmir day. Ghulam Hasan Khan and Ghulam Nabi Hamdani seconded it. However, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad said the Naya Kashmir day could be better celebrated on the day when the State Constitution comes into force.

Others who spoke include:-

Krishen Dev Sethi: "...Mr. Goni is doubtful whether the Government of India ratifies our accession or not. I feel really

are not only joining hands with the government of India but with the toiling masses of India as well. Mr. Goni says we are taking such steps as will lead to merger of Kashmir with India. But I may tell him that it is not so. The Government of India or its President cannot thrust anything on us. It is obvious from this report that apart from some subjects which we have handed over to India, in other matters we have maintained our autonomy. Mr. Goni says that we should remain independent. The decision he wants us to take has been rejected in the year 1947. Sheikh Sahib also went the same way as is suggested to us by Mr. Goni, but he should know that we have rejected it after giving much thought to it."

Ghulam Muhammad Mir Rajpuri: "...So far as the right to secession is concerned my friend Mr. Goni says that he is not against accession of our State to India but only wants to exercise this right in future if the need arises. Here an important question arises. If we exercise this right what are the alternatives before us: we either join Pakistan or remain independent. So far as joining Pakistan is concerned we after much deliberations rule out this possibility. In Pakistan progressive elements are weak and it has been turned into an imperialist war base. There are not enough opportunities available in Pakistan for the development of our cherished plans. If we remain independent can we guard our frontiers and maintain our sovereignty under existing international conditions. In 1947 while we enjoyed a type of independence one of our neighbors launched an attack. If my friend Mr. Goni sees nothing but darkness around him and therefore wants right to secession from India it is because his understanding of politics is defective. It seems he does not witness the growing democratic movement of India."

Muhammad Ayoub Khan: "If such an article is provided in the Constitution of the State, it will give a set back to the ideals of

because in doing so lies the well-being of our state. Being a part of Indian union we have to share the joys and sorrows of the people of India. If God forbid any calamity befalls India, it will not look decent if at such time we demand secession from India."

Abdul Khaliq Butt: "...With regard to the right of secession I would like to submit that the Government of India has always been generous and helpful to us. It is therefore we want to impress upon them that we are loyal to them. (Cheers). To demand the right of secession tantamounts to cowardice. (Cheers). When the perfidious Pakistani rulers launched their perfidious attack on us, we could not at that time defend our land with the 'New Kashmir' booklet in our hands. (Cheers). We, therefore, thought it proper to accede to India. The Government of India came to our rescue and drove out the enemy from our land."

Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hamdani: "...When we first met in the assembly, Honorable Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah declared his policy in no uncertain terms. That policy is our guide today. His policy statement was the advocacy of the need for maintaining and strengthening our accession to India. (Cheers). We are not doing anything new today; all that we are doing is to remove the defects and shortcomings. Our decision to align ourselves with India has been taken under a particular sentiment. We acceded to India not because we were actuated by any desire to demands the creation of a separate state on communal basis but because of the community of principles that exist between us and the people of India."

RP Saraf: "...Regarding the demand for right to secession, I would submit that the masses are not yet conscious enough to grasp the significance of this slogan and they cannot, at this stage, gain anything from it. There is no doubt that in itself the principle is a good one; but it is for only those who have attained a high degree of social, economic and political

Ghulam Ahmad Dev: "...Mr Goni has said that it was not correct for us to accede to India when the Banihal barrier is there. I have got an answer for him. Does he know how apart are West and East Pakistan and what intervenes between them? Does he know that there are certain places in Pakistan to which it has no easy access? Would, under these circumstances, Pakistan give up one of its parts? The geographical conditions cannot make our accession to India impracticable. It is correct that Banihal pass presents great difficulties but are not we planning to remove them soon."

Ghulam Nabi Lolabi: "...Sir, Mr. Goni has said that 8,00,000 people are living across the cease-fire line but I say are they there of their own free will or they are passing their days helplessly under a regime of suppression and tyranny. It is not only the part of State lying on this side of the cease-fire line that is acceding to India but the whole of the State. Because the whole of the State accedes to India, it is her responsibility to free every inch of it from the possession of the aggressors. If India fails to do so we will be justified in saying that she has not fulfilled her promise."

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Permit system abolished

Jammu Kashmir had the distinction of restricting entry of Indian citizens into the State. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah enforced the law requiring Indian citizens to obtain a permit for visiting the State strictly and created a stir in whole of India.

This, according to historians was one of the reasons for his arrest on August 9, 1953. The law was abolished on April 1, 1959 by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Nehru's dream of integrating the State with Indian Union was almost fulfilled. Shayma Prasad Mukherjee, a Jansang leader championed the cause of integration of Jammu Kashmir with the rest of India. Mukherjee defied the Permit rules but was arrested on May 11, 1953 while crossing the border. He died while in custody of the State Government on May 23, 1953 under mysterious circumstances. His death in custody raised wide suspicion across India. His mother, Jogmaya Devi wrote to Pandit Nehru and sought an independent enquiry into the incident. No commission was set up and the death remains a mystery to this day.

The Government of India took advantage of the situation and started interfering in matters which till Mukherjee's death were strictly out of New Delhi's control. The incident also triggered a massive agitation in Jammu. However, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah did not budge from his stand.

The Permit System was a creation of Maharaja Hari Singh. During his rule it was mandatory for non-State subjects to secure special permission from the State Government before

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their entry into the State. During his rule, the administration took measures to prevent sale of land to non-State subjects. The Maharaja also implemented this rule in letter and spirit. He went to the extent of detaining Pandit Nehru when he tried to enter the State to defend Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who had been arrested in connection with the Quit Kashmir Movement of 1946. Although Nehru was released immediately but his arrest reflected Maharaja's resolve to resist acts of aggression against his state.

Holy relic vanishes

The theft of the holy relic Prophet Mohammad's (SAW) hair from Hazratbal shrine on December 27, 1963 caused a stir in the entire sub-continent. Some arrests were effected, an intelligence officer was rushed from New Delhi, the relic was recovered and identified but the culprits were never brought to justice.

The news of the theft spread like wild fire. People came out on the streets to register their protest. A group of people marched to the historic Lal Chowk. On seeing the crowd, the then General Secretary of the National Conference, Rashid Bakshi, who also happened to be the brother of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, appeared on the scene. He wanted to address the people. But the angry crowd hooted and threw kangries (fire pots which Kashmiris carry with them to keep themselves warm) on him. They also set ablaze his jeep. He had to run for his life.

Noted historian, Shabnam Qayoom sees Bakshi Rashid's hand in the theft. According to him, Nehru's Kamraj Plan saw the end of the Bakshi regime. "A less known person Shamas-ud-Din was installed as Prime Minister of the State. Bakshi Rashid who was active and well known in National Conference felt insulted and vowed to avenge the humiliation."

Qayoom further states: "The holy relic was recovered when a hand cuffed Bakshi Rashid led the investigating team to a house boat at Miskeen Bagh. During interrogation he said he had stolen the relic on the directions of Pandit Nehru." This perhaps is the reason behind concealing the names of the culprits.

People from all walks of life came together and formed an action committee for recovery of the holy relic. For the first time Kashmiris rose above petty considerations, forged unity and fought unitedly.

A few persons were arrested. An agricultural assistant identified as Abdul Rashid of Tral after hearing about the theft went to Hazratbal shrine where he was taken into custody.

Then on January 30, 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri came to Srinagar and met a number of persons including Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Moulana Farooq and Sheikh Farooq. On February 3, 1964, Moulana Masoodi, Moulana Farooq and Syed Meerak Shah were taken to Hazratbal. Noor-ud-Din Panday came out with a box from the shrine. The relic was identified. Veteran journalist, Late Sonaullah Bhat has questioned the mode of identification in his book *Kashmiri* 47 to 77.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru lost all hope. According to him Kashmir had been lost. When his intelligence officer, B.N. Mullick phoned him about the recovery of the relic, he said: "You have saved Kashmir for India." The intelligence officer says in his book *My days with Nehru*: "It was an intelligence operation never to be made public."

On February 12, 1964 the then Home Minister, Gulzari Lal Nanda said on the floor of the Parliament that the investigation would take a week to complete. "The culprits shall be identified and brought to justice." The outcome of the investigation has not been made public to this day.

with state's accession to India. He sought an independent state much to Nehru's annoyance. However, Nehru being a matured politician controlled his anger and urged Sheikh Abdullah to stay patient for some time. Nehru reacted politely. 'A park has been named after me in Srinagar. I was under the impression that people from India would come here to enjoy themselves. Any ways, if you want to remain independent, I have no objection. I am going to London for a conference. After I return I will talk to you.' Nehru did return from London but not to give independence to Kashmir. He had planned to cage the roaring lion of Kashmir." (Goni's autobiography *Sada-e-Bazgusht*, page 54.)

Sher-e-Kashmir remained in prison for quite some time. According to Shabnam Qayoom, the Indian state succeeded in breaking his will and determination. He stopped dreaming of Azadi (independence). Instead, he suggested division of Jammu Kashmir as suggested by Sir Owen Dixon. This stands proved by his letter to Colonel Naseer of Egypt in 1965.

While giving a brief history of the conflict and its impact on global politics, Sher-e-Kashmir wrote "...No doubt the best and most democratic solution could be through a plebiscite; should this not be feasible; there are other practicable solutions, suggested in the past. One such solution was made by Sir Owen Dixon, the UN Representative appointed to negotiate a settlement between India and Pakistan. Broadly speaking, Sir Owen Dixon proposed that:

- (a) The southern parts of the state comprising Kathua, Jammu and parts of Udhampur districts (now being predominantly Hindu areas) may be annexed with India.
- (b) The area, now known as Azad Kashmir and Gilgit, Baltistan being exclusively Muslim be annexed with Pakistan.
- (c) The Valley of Kashmir along with the adjoining areas across Banihal (i.e. the district of Doda and the Niabat of Arnas, Gulab Garh) to be allowed to decide its future through a

plebiscite. Leh is to follow the result of plebiscite, held in this territory (Kargil being exclusively Muslim in population to go with the Valley)."

Sher-e-Kashmir concluded his letter by seeking Naseer's help. "The above proposal can be a very good basis for discussion between India, Pakistan and Kashmir. It is hoped that friendly countries, interested in a settlement, will take up this proposal at levels, as well as the international conference. Needless to say that an earnest effort in this direction will be the greatest service to the cause of peace in the world."

Hagroo's interview was recorded at a time when he was on the death bed. He died soon after. According to him, the vision document had a provision for armed struggle. Unfortunately, Maqbool was arrested and the mission could not take off. Maqbool however, escaped from jail on December 9, 1968 and sought refuge in Hagroo's house for a couple of days. Hagroo persuaded him to go back to Pakistan administered Kashmir. However, he took some of Hagroo's books bearing his name and seal along. Bhat probably lost Hagroo's books somewhere in Kupwara. The books were recovered and Hagroo was taken into custody.

During the above mentioned interview, Hagroo recalled the days when he (Maqbool) was a teacher in a Jama't-e-Islami run school at Aarwani, Anantnag. "Maqbool would spend the weekend with me at my house at Sarnal, Islamabad. We would talk about Kashmir politics. He would leave for his school on Monday morning."

Maqbool Bhat escapes

Maqbool Bhat became important after his death. Many people became important by claiming their close proximity to him. Different stories were cooked up and circulated by such elements.

Scores of versions were presented about his escape from jail. However, his friend, Khaliq Hanief of Baramulla narrates the story in his *Ja'la-e-Wattan* Vol. 2, pages 205 to 215. He has quoted one of Kashmir's most efficient police officer, Ali Mohammad Watali.

Khaliq was exiled for his political activities in January 1958. He stayed in Pakistan for seven years and travelled extensively with Maqbool Bhat. The police in Kashmir knew about their friendship. When Maqbool escaped from prison on December 9, 1968, Watali called on him (Khaliq) to enquire about Maqbool's whereabouts.

Khaliq narrates the story as follows: "Maqbool was detained in the female ward of the jail. Another prisoner, Mir Ahmad gave him company. Maqbool's associate, Yasin was in another barrack. The holy month of Ramadhan brought incessant rains with it. Maqbool and Yasin communicated with each other through paper slips. A jail official carried these slips in lieu of some consideration. Maqbool had informed Yasin about his escape plan.

A room in the female ward was used by the jail authorities for dumping of blankets. The eastern corner of this room was connected to the outer wall of the jail. A four inch brick wall separated the store from Maqbool's cell. He made a hole in the wall and used to cover it with blankets. Now he could easily go in

the store room to make a hole in the wall for his escape. Slowly he succeeded in making a hole big enough to let a man pass through it.

A prisoner, Abdul Ahad detained for burglary was assigned the job of taking food to Maqbool's cell at Sehri and Iftaar. Yasin interacted with him one day. "You are lucky. In this holy month, you are taking food to a person who is destined to be hanged. Allah will reward you handsomely for this."

Feeling that he had struck the appropriate chord, Yasin expressed his desire to take food for Maqbool at least once in the holy month. After initial hesitation, Abdul Ahad agreed.

It was raining heavily on December 9, 1968. Abdul Ahad handed over Maqbool's food to Yasin. He covered himself with a blanket and walked towards the female ward. The guard on duty took him for Abdul Ahad and let him in. Maqbool escaped along with Mir and Yasin.

It took the jail staff at least two hours to realize that three prisoners had escaped. The manhunt commenced but it was too late."

College Eves dare

November 14, 1973 opened a new chapter in Kashmir history. The leaders were all set to take the Plebiscite Front to the altar for their vested interests. A deal had been finalized. People, by and large, were scared of indulging in political talk. It was at this crucial juncture of Kashmir's history that the students of Government College for Women did the "impossible". Daring cane charge and tear smoke shells, the defiant students made a strong political statement on that day.

The stage was all set for naming the college after the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru on his birth anniversary. The students resisted the move. Out they came on the posh Maulana Azad Road and pelted stones on government vehicles and the police. Unaware of the mood of the girl students, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah arrived on the scene in his car to preside over the function. He had to retreat as a few stones thrown by "delicate hands" smashed the wind screen. But for this incident, the political wilderness of Plebiscite Front leaders would have ended in 1973 itself. This incident deferred transfer of power to Sher-e-Kashmir by two years, believes noted historian Shabnam Qayoom.

The valiant girls first smashed the signboard that was installed on the main building of the college. The remains of the board remained there till 2009 to remind people of the valiant fight of the college eves. In a jiffy the students of SP College and SP School joined the chorus. Bilquees, a student narrated the story. "As soon as we came out of the college, we saw a

young man throwing stones on the police. He guided us and saved many girls from the cane wielding policemen. The boy was later identified as Jaleel Andrabi."

Bilquees and her friends were the last to leave the "battle field". "We insisted on removal of the board. The authorities promised us immediate action. However, when we looked around, the protesters had left. We were the only persons present on the scene. Then we decided to leave", she said.

The agitation spread to other districts. People, especially the students, came out in large numbers to protest. They raised slogans against New Delhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. His effigies were burnt at a number of places. The government was forced to close down all educational institutions indefinitely. When the colleges opened after a fortnight, the students of Regional Engineering College staged a demonstration at Lal Chowk. Brutal police action left several students injured. Scores were taken into custody. The agitation evoked responses in Jammu as well. The Jammu students attacked MA College and chanted anti-Pakistan slogans.

According to Shabnam Qayoom, the incident took place on November 5, 1973. In his *Kashmir ka Siyasi Inqilaab*, he says Sheikh Mohamamad Abdullah was supposed to preside over the function and faced the wrath of angry students when he was on his way to the college. However, according to Bilquees, it was November 14 and not November 5. "We came to know about the designs of the authorities when all preparations had been finalized. The students were asked to stay back and that is it," she said. Other students of those times have differed with Shabnam Qayoom.

The college remains nameless to this day. It is still called Government College for Women. Very few persons are aware of the historic role the college played in Kashmir politics at a crucial phase. The daring students gave an opportunity to the

resistance forces to regroup. The much needed regrouping took place and infused new life in the movement, though only for a brief period. After two years the leaders fell from grace. They joined hands with what Sher-e-Kashmir called the "worms of the gutter" A movement spread over 22 years was brutally killed. Surprisingly, rather shockingly, Kashmiris celebrated the demise.

Farooq vouches for Maqbool

The car came to a screeching halt near the erstwhile Broadway cinema. Farooq Abdullah was furious and gave two of his colleagues on the rear seat a scornful look. "Tell these bastards to get down. They have insulted a patriot", Farooq told his colleague who gave him company on the front seat.

It was 1975. The political firmament of Jammu Kashmir had changed. National Conference had been revived and people were desperate to join it. Farooq Abdullah was taking Waheed Raina and Sharief-ud-Din to Ghulam Rasool Kochak's residence. Noted columnist and a former bureaucrat, accompanied them.

Kochak, Waheed and Sharief-ud-Din had joined Satantara Party and were desperate to come back to National Conference which they had deserted. Farooq had promised to drive them to the National Conference office.

During the journey, Wahid and Sharif-ud-Din discussed Maqbool Bhat as Farooq Abdullah and the bureaucrat listened keenly. One of them said Maqbool was a double agent and not a real freedom fighter. This angered Farooq so much that he humiliated the persons whom he had promised rehabilitation in National Conference. He lost his cool and even called them "bastards".

Farooq Abdullah, the bureaucrat said, had high regard for Maqbool Bhat. According to noted historian, Shabnam Qayoom, Farooq Abdullah returned from Pakistan administered Kashmir in July 1974 along with his friends. They addressed a gathering at Lal Chowk on July 7, and

threatened militant struggle in case the dialogue with Plebiscite Front and New Delhi failed to yield the "desired results".

However, Mirza Afzal Beg in his address urged the gathering not to take Farooq and his friends from Mirpur seriously. "They are a sentimental lot", he said.

During his Pakistan visit, Dr. Farooq met Maqbool Bhat and agreed with him in principle to work for "liberation of Kashmir". Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) people say with authority that Farooq joined JKLF during that visit to Pakistan.

Farooq Abdullah has repeatedly spoken against Pakistan and Pakistan administered Kashmir. He has ridiculed almost all the separatists but he has never spoken against Maqbool Bhat.

Bulla dies in prison

Late in the evening on February 15, 1975 a police van came to a screeching halt in Sopore's Nowhamam area. An ill fated family was called out only to see one of their beloved members lying dead in the van. The hysterical relatives were silenced with rifle butts. The body was finally carried to a graveyard near Degree College and laid to rest by 11 persons in a grave dug by the police.

It was the body of Ghulam Muhammad Bulla who had been tortured to death in police custody. It was wrapped in a shroud and had been washed in the Central Jail, Srinagar where Bulla had been lodged for a couple of days after his arrest.

When the family members sought permission to bury Bulla in their ancestral graveyard, the police silenced them by rifle butts. The Nowhamam people protested but the authorities imposed curfew in the area and thus prevented people from coming out.

A new development was on the cards in February 1975. The people who were fighting for *Izzat aabru ka muqaam* (honour and dignity) for Kashmiris were about to end their 22 *sala siyasi awaragardi* (22 years of political wilderness). The infamous Indira-Abdullah Accord was signed on February 24 by Kashmir's tallest leader, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Indira Gandhi.

Days before the signing of this accord, conscious people registered protest against the "sell out". Ghulam Muhammad Bulla who had association with political activists like Fazal Haque Qureshi, Nazir Ahmad Wani, Farooq Rehmani,

Musadiq Adil and others also came out to give vent to his feelings. After registering protest, Bulla hoisted a Pakistani flag in Sopore chowk on February 11. He was taken into custody and tortured severely for some hours in the local police station. Later he was shifted to Srinagar Central Jail on the same day. Bulla's woes did not end in the jail as well. The incessant torture proved fatal and Bulla finally succumbed on February 15.

The incident evoked severe reaction in the apple town. Thousands of people defying curfew restrictions came out and raised slogans against the police. The government responded by appointing the then Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Srinagar, Mohan Singh as the enquiry officer. The concerned Station House Officer (SHO) presented a number of witnesses before the commission. All of them tried to bail out the police. Independent witnesses were restrained from appearing before the commission. The findings of the commission have not been made public to date. The SDM, however, offered compensation to the aggrieved family. The family rejected it. The quest for justice continues to this day. People close to the family want a case of murder registered against the guilty.

The time when Bulla achieved martyrdom merits special mention. The people were disgruntled and did not actually know what they were doing. On February 15, 1975, the Plebiscite Front gave consent to the Indira-Abdullah Accord and on February 28, 1975, Kashmiris responded to Pakistan Prime Minister, Zulifkar Ali Bhutto's strike call. The strike paralyzed life in Kashmir. But on March 3, 1975, when Sheikh Abdullah arrived in Srinagar the same people accorded a rousing reception to him. Bulla was one of the few persons who knew what they were doing. By registering protest, he actually rejected the Indira-Abdullah Accord or to put it plainly, the burial of the 22-year struggle of Kashmiris. Incidentally Bulla happens to be the last person to be killed

in custody in the pre-accord era.

He was born to Ghulam Rasool Kar of Nowhamam, Sopore in October 1951. Like all Kashmiris, Bulla resented what he called the occupation of Kashmir by Indian troops. On December 25, 2006, the Jammu Kashmir Muslim League while celebrating the birthday of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah conferred an award on Bulla.

PM becomes CM

Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah assumed office as the Chief Minister with Congress support on February 25, 1975. The cherished goal was achieved after burying the Plebiscite Front and undergoing some embarrassing moments.

On February 15, 1975, the Plebiscite Front gave consent to the Indira-Abdullah Accord. Contrary to Sher-e-Kashmir's expectations, Indira Gandhi briefed the Parliament on February 24 which she was not supposed to do as per an unwritten agreement between the duo.

Sher-e-Kashmir received the shocking news at Jammu and expressed his reluctance to go to Raj Bhawan where he had to take oath as Chief Minister of the state next day. According to Shabnam Qayoom, Indira Gandhi when informed about Sheikh's reluctance, urged the governor, L.K. Jha to allow Mir Qasim, who had submitted his resignation, to continue as Chief Minister. Gandhi also urged Jha to tell Qasim to follow her directions on the Nedous Hotel Issue. The lease of the hotel had expired recently and the Government had plans to lease it out to another party.

According to Qayoom, Mir Qasim persuaded Sheikh to attend the function. He agreed and later accused the media of misinterpreting some of the clauses of the accord. "I will apprise the people of the terms and conditions of the accord soon. No mention has been made about my correspondence with the Prime Minister", he said.

Sheikh's correspondence with Indira Gandhi has been published by Shabnam in his *Kashmir ka Siyasi Inqilaab*, Vol. 5.

However, Sheikh has not made even a passing reference in his autobiography, *Aatish-e-Chinar*. The correspondence reflects Sheikh Abdullah's desperation.

On February 28, the Valley closed to a call given by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulifkar Ali Bhutto. The strike paralyzed life in Kashmir. But on March 3 when Sheikh Abdullah arrived in Srinagar the same people accorded a rousing reception to him. While the saner elements across the globe were trying to understand the strange behavior of Kashmiris, Sheikh Abdullah had strong reasons to feel depressed. He was ditched by Madam Gandhi by informing the Parliament about the accord on February 24.

Al Fateh and Peoples League

When police unearthed the Al Fateh on January 13, 1971, one of its members, Abdul Rouf (name changed) was in Delhi with a group of sportsmen from different Valley schools. He visited the Pakistan High Commissioner's office where he was given a letter for Plebiscite Front founder Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg who was luckily in Delhi. Rouf called on him and gave the letter to him. After going through the letter, Beg took him to the Jamia Masjid area where he introduced him to a group of persons as a student leader from Kashmir.

Rouf during an interview with the author said: "When I handed over the letter to Beg, he urged me to accompany him to Jamia Masjid. He also requested me to tell the people at Jamia Masjid that Al Fateh was not an indigenous organization. To this day, I could not understand why Beg wanted me to lie." At the Pakistan High Commissioner's office, he was also told to convey a message to the Al Fateh leadership. "Tell them time is still not ripe", he was told. Rouf could not comprehend the message. When asked whether he read Beg's letter, he remained mum.

He said there was an understanding between Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg and the Al Fateh. "He supported the activists. Similarly, Munshi Mohammad Ishaq and Sofi Mohammad Akber also supported the pro-resistance leadership."

Rouf was a student when Al Fateh came into being. He was entrusted the job of carrying vegetables and clothes to Barsoo for the "guests". A house at Barsoo on the Srinagar-Jammu

highway housed the headquarters of the organization. When asked about guests, Rouf smiled. No explanation was offered. Veteran pro-resistance leader, columnist and author, Farooq Rehmani believes the creation of Al Fateh was vastly influenced by the events that took place in the early and mid 60's across the globe. The Algerian war of independence, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's talks with President Bin Billa of the newly created independent state and of course the realization that Kashmiri's had to do it on their own. Fortunately Rehmani Sahib responded positively to my request for inputs. In a detailed email he wrote: "I had written some articles in the local newspapers and periodicals; and some of my friends brainstormed on this issue and we shared our views frequently. Ghulam Rasool Zahgir, Fazl-ul-Haq Qureshi, Nazeer Ahmad Wani and I were in close touch. Besides each one of us had a chain of links to accomplish our long term strategy. It had made good progress keeping in view the dark side of infiltration from Pakistan. So it was a local form of resistance at least in the initial stage. After the end of 1965 war, our efforts without lust for fame and political ambitions progressed well till we stepped into 1968. In the fall of 1968, some abortive actions exposed this group, giving the police opportunity to swoop in on them. About a dozen students were arrested from Srinagar and other parts, before my arrest, interrogation and finally detention under the Jammu Kashmir Preventive Detention Act. Late Ghulam Rasool Zahgir, Fazl-ul-Haq Qureshi and Nazir Ahmad Wani, went into hiding for two long years, and in these years they organized Al-Fateh well till unearthed in 1971. Its top leadership, a large number of members and sympathizers were captured from different parts of Jammu Kashmir. The government chargesheeted them under very harsh laws. They were accused of conspiracy with Pakistan, armed rebellion against India, attempts of armed dacoity etc. All the accused

were tried in-camera for five long years, but the prosecuting agencies failed to prove any of the charges against the leaders of Al Fateh."

He added: "After taking oath of Chief Minister of the State, in 1975, Sheikh Abdullah met Al Fateh leaders in Central Jail Srinagar, and later in 1977, withdrew all conspiracy and murder cases against them and they were released after over five years from imprisonment."

Admitting ideological differences among the leaders, Farooq said: "Al Fateh suffered due to political and ideological differences among the leaders during their trial and detention; one group under Ghulam Rasool Zahgir supported Delhi Accord, 1975, between the Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah, while other led by Fazl-ul-Haq Qureshi opposed the accord as a sell-out."

He went ahead to form the Jammu Kashmir Peoples' League (JKPL) and became its founding chairman. However, Nazir Ahmad Wani replaced him after some time. The JKPL was a group of dedicated and committed persons. Some of the members donated blood to raise funds for the organization. However, Farooq Rehmani says the blood was not sold. According to him, it was a symbolic gesture to convey that the accord was not acceptable to it and that the struggle shall be taken forward despite odds.

The betrayal

Sher-e- Kashmir always kept the people, who loved him, in the dark. The dialogue between Plebiscite Front and Government of India was also held behind closed doors. It went on for five years and despite repeated assurances from Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah that the outcome shall be placed before the people, it culminated into the Indira-Abdullah accord of 1975.

Skeptical by experience, the people have every reason to be apprehensive again. However, the leadership this time can prevent another miscarriage of justice by consulting the people.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's misadventures harmed the Kashmir cause, and his reputation as well, but the movement for self-determination survived. The accord lasted just twelve years and after one year of the Sheikh's death armed guards had to be deployed at his grave to protect him from the same people who loved him. The situation would have been entirely different had he taken people into confidence at regular intervals.

Some leaders of the Plebiscite Front, especially Munshi Muhammad Ishaq, accused Sheikh Abdullah of deviating from the "cause" way back in 1970. Munshi was expelled and a strong voice was almost silenced.

The drama started on March 8, 1972 when Sher-e-Kashmir in an interview with the special correspondent of London Times said: "There is no dispute on accession. The dispute is on internal autonomy. Nobody should forget that I gave

Kashmir to India." Sher-e-Kashmir gave this statement in response to American and Chinese statements on Kashmir resolution.

Indira Gandhi welcomed the statement while addressing Parliament. In June 1972, Sheikh Abdullah went to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for a health check up. Indira Gandhi called on him. Sheikh Abdullah subtly expressed his desire of joining what he called the "national mainstream". The same day a correspondent from National Herald saw Sheikh Abdullah at the medical institute in Delhi. Sheikh told the correspondent that "Madam Gandhi wants to open a new chapter on Kashmir. I am not stressing for self-determination. I complained about my arrest in 1953."

The statement caused a stir in Kashmir. Sensing the mood of the people, Sher-e-Kashmir on his arrival in Srinagar addressed the people in Hazuri Bagh (Iqbal Park). After reciting Quran and a few verses from Iqbal's Quliyaat, he said, "Indira Gandhi wants to open a fresh chapter on Kashmir. I too am interested in it. I am seeking *Izat aur Aabiroo* (honour and respect) for Kashmiris. The outcome of talks with centre shall be placed before the public. If people accept it, I will also accept it. If people reject it, the dialogue shall end. People must bear in mind that I shall never compromise their interests."

Sher-e-Kashmir reiterated his stand while addressing the people on July 13 that year. On January 24, 1973 while talking to the Press Trust of India he said: "I no longer challenge Jammu Kashmir's accession to India. However, the relations with centre must be chalked out in accordance with the instrument of accession and Article 370."

Once again the Kashmiris reacted strongly. In response to the public wrath, Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg told the people at Pulwama, "After facing hardships at one front, we have shifted the battle field to another place. This does not mean we have

deviated from the basic stand. We have changed our strategy."

On February 1, he addressed the party workers at Mujahid Manzil. "We are not for power. Vested interests have resorted to our character assassination. You should not listen to them."

After parliamentary elections, Sheikh Abdullah was restrained from entering Kashmir. When the restriction was lifted, he talked to media persons at New Delhi. He said, "...The dispute with India is not with regard to accession. We want future relations to be framed as per provisions of Art 370."

Kashmiris once again expressed reservations. However, he pacified the people in his Sopore address. "Kashmir issue shall be settled in accordance with the wishes of the people. No solution shall be thrust on the people. I have met Indira Gandhi and we have decided to forget the bitterness of the past. The people are the ultimate authority to take a decision viz-a-viz Kashmir settlement."

This was followed by a series of meetings with the Prime Minister but the details were never made public. Instead, the leadership tried its best to keep the anxious public in the dark. And finally, when Sheikh Abdullah became the Chief Minister, the Plebiscite Front was disbanded and National Conference revived. This is how the leadership ended their 22-year-long sojourn in political wilderness.

The 1975 accord did not solve the problem. In fact, it further complicated the situation. Despite indiscriminate use of preventive detention and other black legislations, the sentiment could not be killed. Kashmiris finally reached a stage where they realized the futility of peaceful struggle and bilateral dialogue. They resorted to guns and Kashmir once again sought international attention and solidarity.

Mayhem in Lal Chowk

A group of army men in civvies armed with hockey sticks and iron rods appeared in Lal Chowk on July 26, 1980 and created mayhem. The group damaged taxis, private cars and government property. Civilians were thrashed. The group also resorted to loot and arson.

It is believed that an army driver had hit a rickshaw at Sonawar around two kilometers from the city centre. The driver was taken into custody. The group came out of the barracks and went berserk to free the driver from police lockup. Reports suggest that a senior police officer also received a sound thrashing and lost some of his teeth. The mayhem lasted several hours.

Actually several groups were seen beating people, looting shops, damaging vehicles from Sonawar to Batmaloo.

The mayhem evoked severe reaction from the local population. Stone pelting continued till late hours and continued the next day. The police resorted to firing; killing six people including a Pakistani national.

The demonstrations continued for several days. An army jeep was torched near 'Budshah Bridge. However, the driver managed to escape after firing several rounds from his gun. All activity in the city came to a halt. All educational institutions were closed down indefinitely.

Sher-e-Kashmir was the Chief Minister then and lived at his Moulana Azad Residence barely 100 meters away from the city centre where the army men wreaked havoc. Somebody informed the protesters that Sher-e-Kashmir had gone to

Badami Bagh Cantonment where the army officers urged him to recognize the culprits. It was further stated that he (Sher-e-Kashmir) could not recognize the persons responsible for the mayhem. While this could not be confirmed immediately, it added fuel to the anger. The demonstrations intensified.

The Government finally ordered a probe to be held by a retired High Court Judge. The findings of the probe have not been made public to this day.

Re-Settlement Act?

Expecting stiff resistance from the dissidents, successive State Governments exiled thousands of persons since October 1947. The detested process stopped in early 70's. Thousands of people were forced to migrate to Pakistan after the November 6, massacre in Jammu. A journalist from Jammu in his study *Jammu Muslims* says around 150 thousand people migrated to Pakistan and around 70,000 got killed. The scribe has quoted official figures furnished by the Government of Pakistan administered Kashmir.

Realizing his mistake, Sher-e-Kashmir introduced a legislation in the assembly in 1980 which was later passed. The legislation came to be known as Re-settlement Act. Sensing the gravity of the legislation, the Government of India referred it to the Supreme Court for opinion which returned it after 20 years without any changes or comments. However, the communal forces expressed serious reservations and one among them approached the Supreme Court. The apex court stayed the implementation of the Act. The petition has not come up for hearing for the last many years and the State Government, which is duty bound to defend the legislation is watching like a mute spectator.

When the Supreme Court returned the legislation in 2002, people holding evacuee property in Jammu came out on the streets. The Government had to assure them of their comfortable stay in the property which they hold but does not belong to them. The legislation has far reaching political consequences. As per the provisions of the Delhi Agreement

of 1952 all those people who, prior to partition, were permanent residents of the State and migrated to areas which come under Pakistan will be considered State subjects, if they want to return. This is reflected even in the Kashmir Constitution and in the Indian Constitution. This means that the people who choose to come back will not only claim their property but will also exercise their right to vote if at all a referendum is ever held for Kashmir resolution. It will also change the demographic complexion of Jammu region - something which vested interests do not want to happen at this crucial juncture of the State's history.

The then Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah announced that he will implement the legislation. The State Government also contested the petition in the Supreme Court strongly thus sending wrong signals to concerned quarters. A legal battle ensued.

The petitioners submitted that the Chief Minister's announcement had caused apprehensions in the minds of the people of the State that the Act would be misused by militants and terrorists to settle here permanently. If implemented, more than two lakh Pakistanis might enter the State and settle here. Even Taliban who had been driven out of Afghanistan with fraudulent certificates could settle in the State. Hence the Act should be declared illegal and ultra vires the basic structure of the Constitution.

The State Government in its counter submitted that the Act only provided for a mechanism for the settlement of permanent residents of the State of Jammu Kashmir who were deemed to be citizens of India upon their return from Pakistan.

It further said that though Kashmir remained an integral part of India and the people of Jammu Kashmir were governed by citizenship rules on a par with the rest of the country, the Act did not infringe or abridge any citizenship law of the country

The Act would not threaten the unity of the country in any manner and it was a reflection of the genuine aspirations of the people of the State, the counter said and sought vacation of the interim stay.

The Bench granted two weeks time to the petitioners to file its counter and adjourned the proceedings. The petition is pending adjudication.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President, Mahbooba Mufti said: "The Resettlement Act does not deal with property but with citizenship rights. So anybody who wants his or her property back needs to have their citizenship first," she says. "We don't have any say in it because the matter is with the centre."

The former President of the High Court Bar Association, Advocate Mian Abdul Qayoom believes the right to life also says that one should be allowed to live in his own land. "Even if Supreme Court decides in favor of the PIL, we can't deny property rights to its rightful owners. This is property held under trust. How can you deprive its rightful owners of it? Under the Jammu Kashmir Constitution, the right to property is a fundamental right", he said.

The State Government seems in no mood to contest the petition any more. The State Government has to bear in mind that it shall not do any favor to the people by pursuing the petition. By implementing the Act, it shall wash off some of its sins. And last but not the least, very few people migrated in the post-partition era voluntary. The migration has been overwhelmingly enforced and involuntary.

India lost the match

The first ever one day international in Kashmir was played in Sonawar's cricket stadium on October 13, 1983. A spirited Indian team having won the Prudential (World) Cup at Lords expected a win at Srinagar. But in a few moments the team realized it was playing West Indies not in India but somewhere in Barbados. India lost the match and Kashmiris won a battle. The message was conveyed in clear terms. Indian captain Kapil Dev was angry and the then Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah had to eat a humble pie.

The stadium was packed to capacity. The highly charged spectators were chanting anti-India slogans. The West Indian players were amazed. Could they get such support in West Indies? A spectator displayed Imran Khan's poster urging Sunil Gavaskar to have a look. Gavaskar responded nicely. He raised his hand, bowed his head a little as if admitting Imran Khan's greatness. The gesture had an impact. Gavaskar was spared and the spectators focused attention on the other players.

A pleasant breeze made the chinars shower their leaves on the spectators as if congratulating them for making a strong political statement. It was lunch time. Things calmed down a bit. Some people went outside to fetch snacks. The drama inside did not end even during lunch time. However, the scene changed. Three youths led by a bony chap rushed towards the wicket and started digging. The police chased them and finally grabbed them near the stands. They were grabbed and severely beaten. The match resumed and people almost forgot the incident.

The trio had tried to dig the wicket to disrupt the match. According to them, Kashmir was a disputed territory and could not, therefore, host international matches. It was later learnt that the trio had been detained under the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) for "endangering security of the state." As the match advanced, the pitch of the slogans and screams also increased. West Indies won the match and Kashmiris had a hearty laugh though not the last laugh. A charge sheet was filed in a court of law against Showkat Ahmad Bakshi, Mushtaq-ul-Islam and Shabir Ahmad Shah. The case was dismissed in 2011.

Did Maqbool seek clemency?

It is widely believed that Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) ideologue, Maqbool Bhat, was hanged on February 11, 1984 in Delhi's Tihar Jail after the President of India rejected his mercy petition. However, it is contested by Maqbool's family.

JKLF leader, Altaf Khan, who has compiled a book on Maqbool says he did not seek clemency. "No mercy petition was filed by his family either", he said. Maqbool's family confirms this. "We did not seek clemency", they said.

Noted political activist, Late Ghulam Nabi Hagroo, Advocate, was a close friend of Maqbool Bhat. In an interview with the author he threw light on the towering personality of Maqbool. The interview was conducted around the time Afzal Guru was awarded the death sentence. He said: "Afzal is a commoner. He must file a mercy petition."

Why did he make a mention of Afzal? I had not sought the information. Was it a clue? I asked the question he was interested in. Did Maqbool Bhat seek clemency? "No, clemency was not sought. Instead we decided to file a review petition in the supreme court of India. The job was entrusted to Muzaffar Husain Baig, Advocate. I do not know what happened later. I cannot say whether he filed the petition or not", he said.

In 2006, senior Congress leader, Ghulam Rasool Kar accused Baig of failure to file the review petition. He however, strongly refuted the accusation.

The truth was unveiled by Maqbool's family. "When the date

of execution was fixed after the murder of Indian diplomat, Ravindra Hareshwa Mhatre in Britain, a review petition was filed. However, it was rejected", they said. Mhatre was abducted by JKLF members and subsequently killed.

Muzaffar Husain Baig, in a telephonic conversation with the author said: "It was not a review petition. It was an Special Leave Petition (SLP). I drafted it and Kapil Sibal, Advocate appeared in the Supreme Court."

Giving details, Baig said: "A person cannot be hanged until the concerned High Court confirms the death sentence awarded by the Sessions court. I annexed a certificate from the High Court of Jammu Kashmir stating that Maqbool's death sentence had not been confirmed. Despite that the petition was rejected the day it was filed by a special bench of the Supreme Court headed by Justice Chandrachud who was the Chief Justice of India then. The Attorney General of India, who represented Union of India, took out a piece of an unsigned paper, claiming that to be the confirmation of death sentence by the State High Court. The Hon'ble court took cognizance of the Attorney General's paper and dismissed the petition without any further argument."

The document produced by the Attorney General, Baig believes was just a piece of paper. Though neatly typed, it bore no signature, no seal, nothing. I was amazed how this paper, unsigned and unauthenticated as it was, could override the otherwise properly certified document issued by none else than the Registrar of the High Court, who is supposed to have complete knowledge of court records. But, the court was satisfied with this and accepted the Attorney General's plea. Senior Journalist, Zaffar Mairaj played an important role in making a last effort to save Maqbool. Through his sources he came to know about the arrival of an envoy from Delhi. The envoy met the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah at the Legislative Complex in Jammu. The meeting lasted half an

hour. Farooq called his Law Minister, Chief Secretary and the Police Chief to the Chamber where the envoy was waiting. Soon after a Session judge, Thakur Pavitar Singh was also called who signed the black warrant.

Zaffar filed the story for Aaina. After filing the story he went to Mian Sarwar and discussed the development. Muzaffar Husain Baig who was in New Delhi for a case was also contacted. Ultimately a petition was drafted. However, for various reasons, Kapil Sibal appeared in the court. Mian Sarwar also managed to get Maqbool's brother, Ghulam Nabi from Trehgam. However, he was not allowed to board the flight.

The Government was in a hurry to hang Maqbool to avenge the death of Mathre. Maqbool had escaped from Srinagar Central Jail on December 9, 1968. The case was pending adjudication in a Srinagar court. Dr. Farooq was forced to withdraw the case to pave way for the hanging.

Kumkum Chada, a journalist has written a book *Indian Jail*. She sought an interview with Maqbool Bhat in October 1982. The superintendent disallowed the interview. She preferred a petition in the Supreme Court of India and got an order directing the Jail Superintendent to allow the interview. However, the superintendent R.S. Mathur citing security reasons disallowed the interview. The details of her fight for the interview are written on page 116, 117, 118 and 119 of the book under a separate chapter 'Legal Battle'.

The superintendent in his written reply to Chada on October 25, 1982 states that 'Maqbool has sought clemency and the petition is pending disposal before the President of India.'

Bazaz passes away

The Muslims hated him and the Pandits did not love him. His friends betrayed him and the government persecuted him and finally exiled him. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, a great son of Kashmir was punished for his uncompromising stand on Kashmir. He was a staunch advocate of independent Kashmir and unlike his colleagues did not mortgage his conscience. However, joining Janata Party in 1977, is, perhaps the only grey patch in his long and illustrious political career.

Prem Nath Bazaz is believed to have engineered conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference. The Muslim Conference workers believe that he published a pamphlet in the mid 30's and conferred the title of "Kashmir ka Gandhi" on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. This publication went to Sheikh's head and he started behaving and thinking like Gandhi. This culminated into conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference in 1939.

But before condemning Bazaz for this "political blunder" one must dig deep into history. The facts narrate an entirely different story. Soon after the birth of National Conference, Bazaz and Sheikh Abdullah, who jointly owned the Hamdard, parted ways. Bazaz became Sheikh's "worst enemy". He wrote against Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference. An editorial written by Bazaz on June 10, 1947 merits serious consideration. It reads: "The Hindus do not like National Conference. However, some Hindus have joined it not because they love it but for the hatred it has exhibited against Muslims of India. The inclusion of a handful of Hindus in National

Conference does not make it a representative of the minorities. The Hindus and Sikhs praise National Conference in public because they believe that it is working against the interests of Muslims..."

The founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah held Bazaz in high esteem. During an interview for Hamdard with renowned journalist J.N. Sathu in 1944 at Srinagar, the Quaid said: "People like Prem Nath Bazaz and others can bring the Kashmiri Pandits into mainstream politics and activate them to fight against autocratic Dogra rule." (Author's Interview with J.N. Sathu on July 4, 1997). This was an acknowledgement of Bazaz's capabilities by Jinnah. Perhaps Jinnah did not know that the Pandits hated Bazaz for his political beliefs.

J.N. Sathu was a great admirer of Bazaz. When asked about his role in the birth of National Conference during the interview quoted above, Sathu said: "No, Prem Nath Bazaz did not persuade Sheikh Abdullah to convert Muslim Conference into National Conference. Those who say so were prostrating before their Delhi lords when Bazaz was suffering in a Delhi prison."

On April 11, 1947 Prem Nath Bazaz was shot at. Two persons, Ghulam Ahmad Mir and Muhammad Sultan Najar were taken into custody. However, when Sheikh Abdullah became the emergency administrator, the court acquitted both of them. Bazaz was arrested by the emergency administration on October 21, 1947. Later he was exiled. Bazaz lived in Delhi where he breathed his last during the intervening night of July 5 and 6, 1984.

From Talla to ISL

Maqbool Bhat was hanged in Delhi's Tihar Jail on February 11, 1984. The hanging went almost unnoticed. No protests were held anywhere in Kashmir. This was the time when Peoples League (PL) had lost its sting due to internal bickering. A group of young boys from Srinagar decided to carry forward the resistance to Indian rule.

The group would assemble at a Darasgah at Shamaswari where Fazili Sahib would teach them Quran before they sat together to discuss politics. Firdous Shah, one of the important members of the group said they wanted to create awareness among students about the Kashmir issue, freedom struggle and the "dubious" role played by the politicians. They would often resort to stone pelting on police and government installations. "At times we would chant 'Pakistan Zindabaad' slogans to convey a message," Shah said.

Slowly but surely, the group grew wise. They would carry a football and sit in a corner of a playground. "We succeeded in making people believe that a football team was discussing its problems. But, actually we discussed our strategy in such meetings," he said. "We would try our best to disrupt National Conference (NC) rallies by raising pro-Pakistan slogans. At times the NC workers would grab us and give us a sound thrashing."

Notwithstanding the odds, the group expanded. By the end of 1984, it had swelled to 20 members that included Ishfaq Majid Wani, Yasin Malik and Mushtaq Ahmad Zarger. Meanwhile, noted freedom fighter, Sofi Muhammad Akber

fell ill during detention. He was taken to SMHS hospital for treatment. By chance Firdous and a few members of the group happened to visit the hospital and came across Sofi Akber. They saw a man (later identified as Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Advocate) sitting beside him. Bashir urged them to take out a procession in favour of Sofi Akber. One of the members of the group agreed much to the annoyance of the others.

A few days later, Firdous and other member from the group went to Shiraz cinema to enjoy a movie. They could not get the tickets as most of them were sold in black. An agitated Firdous asked a well-built youth to lift him on his shoulders. He agreed and Firdous shouted "Pakistan Zindabaad" slogans and evoked massive response from the crowd. He also demanded release of Sofi Akber. The Srinagar Times reported this on its front page the next day.

One day a few members of the group including Ishfaq Majid and Firdous were having tea in Standard Hotel at Lal Chowk. A well-dressed man on the other table was keenly listening to their conversation. He sought details about the group which were furnished without any hesitation. What is the name of your group, he asked. "Tala", someone replied. "It must be Tulla not Tala", he said to them. Tulla, according to him, was coined with reference to rogue elements. He turned out to be an Urdu teacher from Budgam. The group had gotten its name.

On Maqbool Bhat's first martyrdom anniversary (February 11, 1985), the Talla group assembled at Bohri Kadal and torched a police bus. A boy from Saraf Kadal died in retaliatory police action that day.

The "Double-Farooq Accord" had ended the Sher-Bakra conflict and Ghulam Muhammad Shah had ousted Dr. Farooq and assumed office as the Chief Minister. A joint function to commemorate the martyrs was planned by the two Farooqs. Talla decided to disrupt this function. Around 100 boys assembled in MP School grounds. It was decided that Firdous

would stand up after Quran recitation and attack the stage. A code word "La Illah-a-Illalla" was also chosen to identify the members of the group. However, before Firdous could stand up, another procession led by Niyaz Ahmad Sofi attacked the stage amid "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans. The workers of Awami Action Committee (AAC) and National Conference responded violently and a clash ensued. "They are Gul Shah's workers," someone shouted. The Talla and Niyaz's group were roughed up. The NC workers also stole the watch of Farooq Ahmad Ganie. Yasin Malik fell in a manhole.

The same year, the Regal cinema hall screened Mustafa Akad's classic Omar Mukhtar (Lion of the Desert). The Talla group after seeing the reaction of the people planned to burn the photos of Sher-e-Kashmir and Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq. Two of its members got tickets and entered the hall. Half an hour later, one of them went out to get the photos. However, he could not get a photo of Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq in Maisuma as it was overwhelmingly inhabited by Sher-e-Kashmir's followers. When the show ended, Sher-e-Kashmir's photo was torched amid slogans. Two persons, Noor Muhammad Katju of Malaratta and Majid Gujree of Zaindar Mohallah were taken into police custody. The film was banned. The members of Talla were either students or unemployed. They somehow collected Rs. 500 and gave it to Katju's mother.

The Talla members realized that stone pelting had not worked. Four separate modules, independent of each other, were formed to start a new chapter in the struggle. The modules were Al Jihad, Holy War Fighters, Muslim Militia and Al Maqbool.

Al Jihad started collecting 'weapons' (iron rods, axes etc.) and also learnt making crude bombs. It also published a hand written weekly - *Al Jihad*, to reach the people. The Holy War Fighters was responsible for the Exhibition Ground blast in the early 1980's. Al Maqbool stressed a need for arms training.

Some of its members had sought arms training in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The Kashmir Muslim Militia also remained active for some time. Information about the modules was kept a highly guarded secret. Most of the Talla members had no information about them.

Talla was greatly impressed by Shabir Shah. However, he was considered a rebel in PL. He was very often accused of violating the constitution. A rally organized by Shah at Anantnag was considered an unpardonable sin by the then chairman, Farooq Rehmani. According to him, Shah had not sought permission from the party. Rumors about an ouster of Shah from PL were rife. The Talla members were very concerned.

Meanwhile, Yasin Malik's elder sister got married in November 1986. Most of the Talla members were present. A PL member and a close associate of Shabir Shah was also invited. While women were busy singing marriage songs, history was being made in another room. The Islamic Students League (ISL) came into being but a question haunted all of its members - after a brief discussion it was decided that Shabir Shah, if ousted from PL would head the newly formed organization.

However, as time passed, the PL found it extremely difficult to oust Shabir and ISL was handled by Sheerazi, Nayeem Khan, Yasin Malik, Ishfaq Majid and others. Shakeel Bakshi, the incumbent chairman of ISL was in jail while this important development took place. Soon after his release, he joined ISL as acting president and was later made General Secretary.

Millad-un-Nabi (SAW) was approaching. The new organization decided to celebrate the occasion in grand style. All leaders including Syed Ali Geelani, Muhammad Yusuf Shah alias Salah-ud-Din, Ashraf Sehrai, Ashraf Saraf, Professor Abdul Gani and others were motivated to participate. A few horses were made available and the

procession started from Iqbal Park, Hazoori Bagh. It ended at the martyrs' graveyard, Khawaja Bazar where some of the leaders addressed the gathering.

The Muslim United Front (MUF) had come into existence and ISL also became its constituent. The new amalgam decided to contest elections. Their explanation about participation in the electoral process was accepted by all the constituents. According to Firdous Shah, the MUF offered four Srinagar seats to ISL. However, the offer was declined but the ISL leadership assured MUF of its support and cooperation.

An ailing Shakeel Bakshi was detained in Kothibagh police station. People close to him urged him to contest elections on a MUF ticket from Amira Kadal constituency, but he refused. He was averse to the very idea of contesting elections. "It will adversely affect the freedom movement," he told his compatriots. The Amira Kadal ticket went to Muhammad Yusuf alias Salah-ud-Din.

Hilal Ahmad War, a founder member of ISL, however, contests this. According to him no such offer was made to him on behalf of ISL. "The MUF urged us to nominate four persons for contesting elections. Barring Muhammad Abdullah Sheerazi none among us was interested in joining the electoral process."

He said ISL supported MUF election programme because a close associate of Shabir Ahmad Shah came with a letter, (which he attributed to Shah) urging ISL to participate in elections. But Mushtaq-ul-Islam who later headed the Hizbullah and now heads a faction of Muslim League said he had met Shah the previous day and no such thing was discussed. "Later, it was proved that the letter was fake", Hilal said.

It seems, the ISL had made it a point to get Yusuf elected from Amira Kadal, and Yasin Malik, Sheikh Abdul Hamid and others worked tirelessly. On the day of polling, Salah-ud-Din

Delhi's tactical mistake

The Assembly elections were held on March 23, 1987. People, by and large, believe the rigged elections opened a new chapter in Kashmir history. A question haunts the saner elements in the State even today. Had Muslim United Front (MUF) formed the government, what would have the amalgam done?

There is no denying the fact that most of the leaders of the MUF had separatist tendencies. But after taking over the government they would have ruthlessly crushed the "anti-national" elements like other governments.

The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leaders like Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Malik Mohammad Yasin and others were actively campaigning for the MUF. They were arrested after elections by the National Conference government. Their fate would not be any different had MUF formed the government.

When Sher-e-Kashmir assumed office of the emergency administrator in 1947, he got some of his staunch supporters arrested. Noor Mohammad Sofi, a baker from Koker Bazar area, whose mere presence would scare Sheikh's opponents, had to spend around three months in jail during his beloved leader's rule. He had dared to seek an explanation from his leader. Some others met a similar fate.

The MUF evoked massive support by feeding "fairy tales" to the gullible people. "We would pass a resolution in the assembly to revoke accession", some people were told. This is exactly what Jama't-e-Islami had been telling the people to

justify their participation in elections. The Jama't-e-Islami contested elections when Sher-e-Kashmir called for a poll boycott. "We would raise the Kashmir issue on the floor of the house", they would tell the people. History is witness to the fact that the Jama't legislators never raised the issue. Syed Ali Geelani once admitted that the National Conference Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) would raise a hue and cry in the house whenever he stood up to speak.

Keeping the MUF out of power was a tactical mistake by New Delhi. Had MUF formed the government, the situation would have been different today.

Maulana Maudoodi and Kashmir

"We have just two options for Kashmir resolution. Making India accept the right to self-determination of the people of Kashmir through peaceful means, or, use our armed forces in the same fashion as India used its army in Junagarh. There is no third option. I am closely watching the situation and firmly believe that we will have to exercise the second option. But, belated use of this option will not yield results." (*Daily Tasneem*, Lahore, August 12, 1948). This is how Moulana perceived the situation in 1948.

Moulana has written a booklet comprising 125 pages titled *Masla-e-Kashmir aur iska hul* (Kashmir issue and its solution). The book has two parts and was compiled in 1988. It was published by Al Ansar Publications, Delhi.

The first part of the book deals with partition of the sub-continent, a brief history of the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan's stand, Indian policy and propaganda and the persecution of the people of Kashmir.

The second part of the book merits special consideration. On page 88, the Moulana says Jihad is the only option left to liberate Kashmir from Indian occupation. This chapter is based on Moulana's address at Muzaffarabad on November 24, 1965. It was reported by *Weekly Aayeen* on December 12.

The Moulana said: "Negotiations are a futile exercise: meaningful negotiations between India and Pakistan could solve the dispute. Various countries have been urging the two countries to sit together and settle the issue. Recently the USSR has offered its good offices for negotiations. But the past

eighteen years reflect that India has not been sincere and cannot be trusted. India accepted the UN resolutions of August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949. But in 1958, India suddenly changed its stand. Now they claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India."

The Moulana also lashed out at UN for its failure to find a solution to the vexed problem. "Up to 1965, it continued to send missions to Kashmir. The UN also appointed a plebiscite administrator who gets a hefty amount as salary even now. Then came a time when Indian Foreign Minister while addressing the world body said Kashmir was an integral part of India and it was purely an internal affair of India. No member had the courage to stand up to set records right. It will be totally unwise on our part to wait for UN awakening."

He has severely criticized the role of the super powers (USA and USSR). According to him, USSR has complicated the issue by reckless use of its veto on Kashmir. "The USSR supported India on Kashmir because Pakistan chose to sign SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Eastern Treaty Organization). Pakistan suffered a lot because of its friendship with USA. But Americans always betrayed us. If we trust Americans and expect the super power to settle Kashmir dispute, it will settle it in a way that Kashmir may never get its self determination and Pakistan may lose its sovereignty."

Moulana also took Britain to task for its role in creating the Kashmir issue. "Had Britain acted honestly and sincerely, the Kashmir issue would not have emerged."

The revered scholar comes to the most important point on page 98. "The only option left with us is Jihad. We have to wake up, believe in Almighty Allah and liberate Kashmir by force. I have been saying this all along and today I repeat it here. There is no

way out except Jihad. Some people say India is a big power but when a Muslim has faith in Allah he can fight an enemy ten times stronger than him. Past experiences have proved this."

On page 85, the Moulana says: "I treat Kashmir as part of my body and I do not want it severed from my body. The Shariah has given a right to the people of Kashmir (Azad Kashmir and Occupied Kashmir) to liberate their homeland through Jihad. They are not bound by the agreements that Paksitan government has entered into with other countries. And the people of Pakistan are bound (by Shariah) to help people of Kashmir in this Jihad. However, the people of Pakistan are bound by the decisions of their government. If the State of Pakistan goes to war we too must go to war. And, if the government refrains from it we too must exercise restraint. The Shariah casts a duty on us (Pakistanis) to respect the treaties that have been signed to maintain international relations." (Letter to Chief Organizer, High Command Jihad Council, Peshawar, November 3, 1963).

The Moulana in a statement issued in August 1947 (later produced by Daily Qasid, Lahore on September 18, 1950) urged the Government of Pakistan to relieve itself from treaties with India to ensure participation of Pakistanis in Jihad-e-Kashmir. The Moulana believed that direct involvement of Pakistanis in fighting was not justified. But he went on to say they can provide food, medicines and even sell arms to the people of Kashmir. "I have never said that Pakistanis who fight in Kashmir on the fatwa (Ruling) of some scholar are not dying a martyrs' death", the Moulana issues the clarification on page 73.

New era commences

Kashmiris woke up to a change on September 18, 1988. A new era had just commenced. The militants had announced their arrival through the barrels of sophisticated weapons. A militant identified as Aijaz Dar had died in an encounter with the police. People could not believe it but the news was soon confirmed by official media.

Aijaz knocked at the door of the then Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Ali Muhammad Watali's residence at Kursoo Rajbagh in the wee hours on September 18. He had hid his Kalashnikov rifle beneath his black shawl. What actually happened there could not be ascertained. However, a security guard talked to a relative of the DIG. He said: "He knocked at the door. We opened it and saw a well built man clad in shawl. He wanted to see Watali sahib. We posed the usual questions to him. Irritated he exposed his rifle. A scuffle ensued amid deafening screams. The militant's confused associates opened fire. The militant got killed. Some rounds were also fired by his fleeing associates. Later we came to know that the slain militant was Aijaz Dar."

This was confirmed by Bilal Siddiqui, a close friend of Dar. "Yes Aijaz was killed by the bullets of his own colleagues", he said during an interview with the author.

Aijaz shot into prominence during the Muslim United Front (MUF) electioneering in 1987. He could be seen brandishing a 12 bore gun in meetings and rallies of Syed Salah-ud-Din who contested the elections from Amira Kadal constituency. People were amazed to see a young man brandishing a gun at public places. However, the police took

serious note of it and Aijaz was arrested.

After his release, Aijaz crossed the cease-fire line to seek training in Pakistan administered Kashmir (PAK) along with some of his friends. Abdul Ahad Waza, who claims to be the first militant of Jammu Kashmir, claims in an interview with the Daily Excelsior that he sent Aijaz across. "Aijaz was in the third group of recruits sent by me to Azad Kashmir for arms training. Mohammad Ashraf Dar and Maqbool Illahi, who later shot into prominence as Hizbul Mujahideen commanders, besides Abdul Waheed and Humayun Azad, were other members of this group."

Aijaz happens to be the first "martyr" of the on-going militant struggle. His anniversary is observed by all the organizations.

Bar resolutions

In 1987, I joined the legal profession as a lawyer. The on-going movement had commenced but people, by and large, were confused. Even lawyers with political background attributed the occasional blasts to Mufti Sayed.

One day in 1989, while I was having tea in the cafeteria, a group of lawyers came with a piece of paper. I was told to sign the paper. Hurriedly, I went through the lines. It was a resolution seeking right to self determination for the people of Jammu Kashmir. I willingly signed it and joined the group. In two hours, 180 lawyers signed the resolution.

Martyr Jaleel Andrabi was delighted to see the resolution. He also signed it and hoped it (resolution) would change the course of Kashmir history. Very few lawyers affiliated to National Conference signed the paper. The Bar at that time had more than 400 members.

Next day, the news was carried in detail by *Kashmir Times*. The news had an impact. The lawyers who had refused to sign passed another resolution endorsing the previous resolution. The second resolution was signed by 190 lawyers. Barring a few exceptions, the entire Bar, cutting across religious and political affiliations sought right to self determination. They also resolved to put in tangible efforts to achieve the objective.

In early 1990, the Bar passed yet another resolution urging all lawyers not to appear on behalf of the government. Although this had an adverse effect on cases especially on habeas corpus petitions but the boycott conveyed a message. During those

times lawyers from Jammu would appear in Kashmir courts to represent the government. The lawyers stood by this resolution up to 1996. That was the time when Dr. Farooq Abdullah assumed office as the Chief Minister. He managed to woo some lawyers and the government got a few lawyers for the first time in six years.

January 21 massacre

On January 20, 1990 Jagmohan's first television address as Governor of the State stunned me. It was very provocative. He said: "I will not take any salary. I will just take Rs 1000 to meet my personal expenses. I promise you a clean administration. If anybody creates a law and order problem, *meray haton say amun ka pata khisak jayega* (the cards of peace I am carrying will slip away from my hands). It was a clear warning to lesser mortals like me. Behave or I teach you a lesson. In less than 24 hours the threat was carried out. Chacha (father of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front - JKLF - Area Commander, Sheikh Abdul Hamid) called on me. The speech had frightened him as well. "They (the government) are going for a massive search operation. What shall we do now?" I had no answers but I told him to keep cool. "If they have decided to go for searches there is nothing we can do about it. Let them come and search our houses. We have nothing to hide."

A harsh reality dawned on Chacha notwithstanding the heroics of his son. We were too weak to fight the huge military might of India. By the time he stood up to leave, his face had fallen. I felt sorry for him. The sun also did not shine on that day. Embarrassed by molestation of women at Chotta Bazar during the first ever search operation in Kashmir, it hid behind the clouds. The molestation of women sent shock waves across Srinagar. People came out to register protest. *Allah-o-Akber Kabeeran Kabeera* (Allah is great; greater than the greatest). This slogan was chanted across Srinagar that evening.

We also assembled in Magarmal Chowk and expressed solidarity with Chotta Bazar people. Around midnight, two army vehicles arrived. Many people ran for shelter. But the troops had arrived to rescue their officer who lived in Magarmal Bagh. The officer and his family left Magarmal Bagh for good that night. Soon after, a bearded man from Sarai Bala, who used to play cricket with me in the erstwhile Hazuri Bagh came. He said: "Ashfaq Sahib (another JKLF commander) wants you to take out a procession tomorrow morning." I did not trust him. I had absolutely no reason for not trusting him but something deep inside me forced me to seek a clarification from Ashfaq Majid Wani. Somebody called him. Good God! He had not talked to the person and did not want people to take out processions in the morning. He urged us to restrain people from doing so. We tried our best but destiny had something else in store for Kashmir that day.

Processions were organized from Batmaloo, Rajbagh and elsewhere. I was with Chacha in Batmaloo desperately trying to keep the people indoors. In the process, I found myself arguing with a stranger on the Silk Factory Road near DAV School. Chacha was nowhere to be seen. Here the CRPF personnel fired several rounds in air. People ran for shelter. I reached interior Sarai Bala. A small group was walking towards Lal Chowk. I joined them. Meanwhile a huge procession appeared from the Rajbagh area. Many people joined it and we started marching towards Chotta Bazar.

The peaceful procession was intercepted by a party of the Jammu Kashmir Police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The men in khakhi opened fire without any provocation. I did not know what to do. Everybody was running for his life. I also started running. I saw my brother's driver, Farooq Ahmad, falling to bullets. I could not do anything for him so I did not stop. Running for safety was my only priority then. But while running I saw something that had

never happened before in Kashmir. A CRPF trooper with a light machine gun (LMG) was firing indiscriminately on the scared people. Rouf went to him and tried to snatch his gun. The trooper sensing danger emptied the entire magazine in his chest. Rouf fell in a pool of his own blood. He happened to be the younger brother of my elder brother's friend. I knew him well but did not have the guts to pick him up. I somehow wanted to run away from there. At last I made it to Lal Chowk. I reached my place in the evening. I hated myself for not helping Farooq and Rouf. But could I help them?

The morning of January 22 was very painful for me. I was awakened by Chacha. "There are nearly ten bodies in the control room. Get up, we have to bury them", he ordered. I murmured something. Most probably I abused Chacha. Why? I do not know. Anyway, I was out in the graveyard in fifteen minutes. Many people were waiting for the bodies. The truck came with the bodies and things went out of control. A few graves had been dug. I think we buried the bodies without offering *Nimaaz-e-jinaza* (funeral prayers). My elder brother was taking photographs of the bodies. I appreciated his wisdom. The identity of the bodies could not be ascertained. A police man accompanying the bodies told us that 52 people had got killed on the spot and around 250 had sustained injuries.

A few bodies were buried at Sarai Bala as well. We went to the graveyard. One of my friends, Mohammad Ashraf was there. He too had received a minor injury at Gaw Kadal. His 80 year old neighbor was among the dead. "What a lucky man he has been. He died a martyr's death after enjoying life for eighty years", Ashraf said. I had no comments to offer.

Desperate India

A few days after the January 21, 1990 massacre, noted Indian journalist, Tavleen Singh visited Srinagar. A friend had given her my phone number. She called and I took her around the city. She interacted with some of the survivors of the massacre. I also showed her a heap of shoes at Maisuma which the people had abandoned while running for their lives on January 21. She seemed shocked and also wrote a strong piece in her Fifth Column in the Indian Express.

She returned after a fortnight and called on me. I could sense she was on a "mission". She wanted to meet the militant commanders. I expressed my inability to contact the commanders. But she seemed desperate. Finally, she said that the Kashmir Affairs Minister, George Fernandes was keen to meet the leaders. "**He is ready to discuss autonomy**", she said. She also told me that George was in Srinagar waiting for the leaders.

She knew I was averse to the very idea of autonomy. She looked into my eyes and smiled. I ignored the gaze and made clear that nobody could risk a misadventure of discussing autonomy at that point of time. However, she was keen to meet the leaders. We drove around the city for quite some time.

"Why don't you come with me and have a talk with George?" It took me a couple of minutes to recover from my shock. "I am an ordinary lawyer. I do not represent anybody. Why should George Fernandes talk to me? And, what should I talk about", I said. "You are missing a good chance. This time

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they (New Delhi) 'are ready to consider restoration of autonomy. Please find somebody", she begged. I dropped her at Broadway Hotel and left. I was happy. The movement had made an impact. India was desperate to discuss the future of Jammu Kashmir with an ordinary lawyer!

The same evening, my father's friend, Moulana Abbas Ansari came to my place. He was discussing something with my father, when I entered the room. While serving tea to him, I narrated the incident. He showed no interest. "I am nobody in contemporary Kashmir. It is a different story this time", he said.

Chrar-e-shareef chalo

Late in the evening on February 22, 1990, the Islamic Students League (ISL) Chief, Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi and his two associates called on me and urged me to march to the Chrar-e-Sharief shrine with them on February 24. The call "Chrar-e-Sharief Chalo" (March to Chrar-e-Sharief shrine) was given by a commoner, Zaffar Kawa. I urged Shakeel to discourage such unknown elements. "Kawa is a commoner and we do not know him. Today he has given a call, tomorrow somebody else will come up with a different programme. It will take away the initiative from the leadership," I pleaded. But Shakeel had made up his mind and on the scheduled day, I found myself seated beside him (Shakeel) in a jeep driven by an activist of the ISL. It was bon voyage. The vehicles on the serpentine curves en route the revered shrine were a visual feast. All were in high spirits, the dampness in the air notwithstanding.

It took us around three hours to reach the shrine. Thousands of people were already waiting in the shrine lawns. A podium had been erected in front of the mosque. It was total confusion. Nobody knew how to start the proceedings. Noted lawyer, Mian Abdul Qayoom who headed the newly created alliance of seven pro-resistance organizations Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir was also on the podium. Rafiq Shaheen, a leader of the ISL finally called Bakshi to address the gathering. Shakeel sought resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. He told the people to be prepared for a prolonged struggle and massive sacrifices. He also hailed all militant commanders and

organizations. After concluding his speech, he left hurriedly. A huge crowd gathered around him and I lost him.

I started my journey back home all alone. However, some people soon joined me. All of us were hungry. The small town had never witnessed such a rush and the local shopkeepers made a fortune. A chouchwor (Kashmiri bun) was sold for Rs. 10. The marchers did not take home a good impression of the local population. Almost all of them were cursing the shopkeepers for the "loot" they resorted to on that important day.

After walking for more than ten kilometers, an acquaintance offered us a lift in his vehicle. I heaved a sigh of relief. Kralpora was generous enough to offer us bananas. A group of people approached us with "vital" information. The police were checking the vehicles ahead on the road. "If you have a militant in your car, he must disembark here." We received more bananas and similar information at many places. However, the police and other agencies had decided to remain indoors that evening for obvious reasons.

The enthusiasm of the people was worth seeing. They showed concern about the safety of the militants and offered fruits to the people. The entire population of the Kashmir valley worked like a team that day. The people, irrespective of their political affiliations, were out on the streets waving at the marchers, offering them drinks and praying for their safety. The "Charar-e-Sharif Chalo" procession in the words of Ved Marwah (Advisor to the Governor) was an unbelievable sight. Despite my severe opposition to the programme, I had to admit that a strong message was conveyed that day. The Kashmiris not only displayed their unity but conveyed in clear terms that they were all for freedom from Indian rule.

I was a lawyer then and held Mian Abdul Qayoom in high esteem for his commitment to the struggle. On the podium at Charar-e-Sharif, I could feel that he was not given the respect

that he deserved. I was right. After talking to a few political activists who were present on the podium, it dawned on me that his chairmanship of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir had not gone well with some "important" people. I also came to know that they were not happy with the inclusion of some religious and social organizations in the newly created amalgam. Qayoom did not represent any organization in the amalgam, but was there as an individual.

Shakeel reached Batmaloo around midnight. I met him the next morning and shared my observations. He agreed that a strong message had been conveyed. However, he disagreed that some people were unhappy with Mian Qayoom. But, he too was averse to the inclusion of some organizations in the alliance.

Third Jail Break

It was the first night of the blessed month of Ramadhan (March 27-28, 1990). An escape planned over the past few weeks was underway in Srinagar Central Jail. Twelve persons escaped and the people celebrated their "freedom".

The hunt commenced soon after but it was too late. At least 24 employees including the Superintendent and his Deputy were dismissed. Two among them identified as Ghulam Qadir Khan and Muhammad Amin Zarger were taken into custody and severely tortured in Kothibagh Police Station for 17 days. They were shifted to Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC), Hari Niwas, and after a month shifted to Coimbatore Jail in Tamil Nadu.

Interviews with some of the employees, their relatives and the people living in the vicinity of the jail brought the following story to fore. "The power was off in the jail due to a snag in the transformer. The prisoners had somehow managed hexa blades for cutting the iron rods. They had also made a ladder. The bed sheets were cut in to pieces to make ropes. Twelve prisoners, Captain Rashid, Khurshid Ahmad Chalkoo, Abdul Rasheed Shaikh, Nisar Ahmad Paul, Gulam Nabi Shaikh, Abdul Majeed, Azad Ahmad, Ali Mohammed Malik, Bashir Ahmad Najar, Mohammad Amin Sofi, Gulam Nabi and Gulam Rasool Shah made use of the 'tools' they had procured and produced and escaped from Khujyabal side."

Interestingly Peoples League (PL) leader, Mahmood Sagar, was also in the prison but he stayed back. He was shifted to Jodhpur Jail for security reasons immediately after the jail

break.

After a year, Ghulam Qadir Khan and Muhammad Amin Zargar were released on parole. However, they were required to present themselves before the investigating authorities once a week. Later the court ordered their release and reinstatement. However, severe torture had adversely affected Ghulam Qadir's nerves. He turned mentally ill and died without hearing the good news of his reinstatement. His relatives swear by his innocence. "He was not on duty on that night", they revealed.

Meanwhile, the court reinstated the other employees who were dismissed for "facilitating" the escape. They include, Peerzada Rafiqui (Superintendent), Manzoor Ahmad Trambo (Deputy Superintendent), Ghulam Ahmad Shah (Assistant Superintendent's of Police), Ghulam Rasool Dar alias Rasool Gada, Mohammad Maqbool Khan, Abdul Gani Ganie, Ghulam Qadir Gursee, Nazir Ahmad Khan, Ghulam Qadir Padroo, Masood Ahmad Dar, Avtar Krishen, Mohammad Razab Dar, Abdul Ahad Sheikh (all constables) and Mohammad Amin Zargar (electrician).

Islamia College massacre:

Tahir Ahmad Baba, aged 42, lives in the vicinity of Islamia College, Srinagar. He too was shocked by the news of Mirwaiz Moulana Farooq's killing, on May 21, 1990. He sustained injuries in the firing that left scores of mourners wounded. Recalling the gruesome incident he said: "The news of Mirwaiz's killing spread like wild fire. I came to know that a procession carrying Mirwaiz's body was about to arrive in the area. I came out and saw some people offering water to the mourners. Meanwhile, hundreds of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel came and blocked the Akhoon Sahib Chowk. I sensed trouble. Soon the wailing procession arrived. Around ten thousand people passed safely but were intercepted by the CRPF at Akhoon Sahib Chowk. Suddenly CRPF men posted in Islamia College opened fire. I saw people falling to bullets. I was hit by several bullets in my legs and fell down. It was 3:30 pm. The firing continued for around ten to twelve minutes."

It seemed recalling the incident had affected his nerves. He paused and then pointed towards his artificial leg. "Doctors amputated my left leg as the bullets had damaged it beyond repair", he said.

"I saw some people climbing unsuccessfully the fencing of a veterinary office. The CRPF men were targeting them as well. Several injured fell on me but, somehow I managed to hold my nerves. When firing stopped finally, I saw CRPF men with their guns oozing smoke from the windows of the college building. They had taken positions along the wall of

the college and I could see them in the bunker. After some time, the CRPF men came out of the college and began searching the pockets of the dead. They also removed earrings from the women martyrs. When they left, the people of the area showed exemplary courage and started lifting the dead and the injured in hand driven carts. The injured were taken to the hospital in carts. The CRPF posted at Saidpora stopped them saying ambulances were arriving. The people waited for some time for the ambulances. However, no ambulances arrived and the people marched ahead."

Masood Ahmad Beg of Ashraf Khan (Kathi Darwaza) was only 17, when he found himself at the wrong place at the wrong time. "I found myself at Akhoon Sahib Chowk which was sealed by CRPF personnel. I was scared and started moving in the opposite direction (towards the college). The moment I reached the place where people were offering water to the mourners, firing started. Luckily, I fell down. A few bodies fell on me but I somehow managed to hold myself. Suddenly, I started running. I saw an open door and without wasting a moment rushed inside only to see scores of bodies. I escaped from the back door. My shirt was red with blood. I reached my house and saw hundreds of women mourning my death. Somebody had informed them about my death. However, on seeing me alive, they heaved a sigh of relief."

Both Tahir and Beg said that the CRPF men at the Akhoon Sahib Chowk also started firing on the procession. Some bullets hit the body of the slain Mirwaiz, they said. This was corroborated by Imtiaz Ahmd Doora of Sheesh Bagh, Islamia College who was at the Akhoon Sahib Chowk. "Everybody was running. I saw a small boy of 8-9 years. He fell down. I threw myself over him to save him from getting trampled. Several people carrying the body of the slain Mirwaiz also fell to bullets. Some bullets must have hit the body of the Mirwaiz", he said.

Kunan Poshpora tragedy

It was a painful experience. On my arrival at the haunted hamlet of Kunan Poshpora in May 2001, I came to know about an elderly woman who had confined herself to a room since her rape by drunken soldiers on February 23, 1991. Another woman is still scared of looking in the mirror. Students from the hamlet were denied admission in a high school in a neighboring village. Unmarried girls find it difficult to get a match for the stigma they carry with them. The sufferings were endless.

Back home, I filed a story in *Greater Kashmir*. It evoked good response. Madam Dil Afrose who runs a private engineering college opened a school and a vocational centre in the hamlet. The chairman of the erstwhile Human Rights Forum, Muhammad Ahsan Untoo came up with a proposal which I liked. We decided to go ahead and next day Untoo was in Kupwara. After a few days he was able to persuade around ten boys from the neighboring villages to marry the girls from the hamlet. We fixed a date for the marriages. A few NGO's also announced gift packs for the brides and the grooms.

However, the people from Poshpora prevailed on us to defer the date till autumn. We agreed. But the marriages could not be solemnized in autumn as well for various reasons. We were told to wait till spring. But in April a delegation from the hamlet called on us. "Give us the money and we will solemnize the marriages on our own", the delegation said. We told them that the gift packs will be given by the NGO's only if marriages are solemnized as earlier decided. The villagers

showed reluctance and the idea was abandoned.

But the quest for justice continues as the government ignored recommendations of the State Human Right Commission (SHRC) to re-investigate the mass rapes.

The army has been vehemently denying the allegations as baseless. A probe conducted by former Press Council of India (PCI) chairman, B.G. Verghese gave a clean chit to the soldiers. Although the government's investigations into the incident rejected the allegations as baseless, international human rights organizations have expressed serious doubts about the integrity of these investigations and the manner in which they were conducted.

According to reports, on February 23, 1991 at approximately 11 pm soldiers from the 4th Rajputana Rifles cordoned off the village of Kunan Poshpora to conduct a search operation. The soldiers allegedly gang raped a large number of village women overnight till 9 am the next day. Local villagers alleged that up to 32 women "were gang-raped without any consideration of their age."

The victims ranged in age from 13 to 60. The village headman and other leaders have claimed that they reported the rapes to army officials on February 27, but the officials denied the charges and refused to take any further action. However, army officials claim that no report was ever made.

On March 5, villagers complained to Kupwara District Magistrate S.M. Yasin, who visited the village on March 7 to investigate. In his final report, he stated that the soldiers "behaved like wild beasts" and described the attack as follows: "A large number of armed personnel entered into the houses of villagers and at gun point they gang-raped 23 ladies, without any consideration of their age, married, unmarried, pregnancy etc... there was a hue and cry in the whole village."

Following the District Magistrate's report, increased

publicity about the incident led to strong denials from Indian military officials. On March 17, Mufti Baha-ud-Din Farooqi, former Chief Justice of the Jammu Kashmir High Court, led a fact-finding mission to Kunan Poshpora. Over the course of his investigation, he interviewed 53 women who claimed to have been raped by the soldiers, and tried to determine why a police investigation into the incident had never taken place. According to his report, villagers claimed that a police investigation into the event had never commenced because the officer assigned to the case, Assistant Superintendent of Police Dilbaugh Singh, was on leave. Farooqi later stated that in his 43 years on the bench he "had never seen a case in which normal investigative procedures were ignored as they were in this one." Just a few months later, in July 1991, Dilbaugh Singh was transferred to another station without ever having started the investigation.

On March 18, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Wajahat Habibullah visited the village, and filed a confidential report, parts of which were later released to the public. He concluded: "While the veracity of the complaint is highly doubtful, it still needs to be determined why such complaint was made at all. The people of the village are simple folk and by the army's own admission have been generally helpful and even careful of security of the Army's officers... Unlike Brig. Sharma I found many of the village women genuinely angry ... It is recommended that the level of investigation be upgraded to that of a gazetted police officer."

In response to criticism of the government's handling of the investigation, the army requested the Press Council of India to investigate the incident. The investigative team visited Kunan Poshpora in June, more than three months after the incident. Upon interviewing a number of the alleged victims, the team claimed that contradictions in their testimony

rendered their allegations of rape "baseless." The team interviewed hospital officials who stated that one of the women who had been pregnant at the time of the incident had given birth to a child with a fractured arm just four days afterwards. She claimed that she had been kicked during the rapes; a pediatrician who visited the village as part of the Jammu Kashmir People's Basic Rights Committee, confirmed her story.

The Press Council team claimed that the fetus had been injured during delivery. Medical examinations conducted on 32 of the women between March 15 and 21, nearly one month after the incident, confirmed that the women had wounds on their chests and abdomens, and that the hymens of three of the unmarried women had been torn. The team claimed that "such a delayed medical examination proves nothing" and that the medical findings were typical among villagers. Ultimately, the team concluded that the charges against the army were, "well-concocted bundle of fabricated lies" and "a massive hoax orchestrated by militant groups and their sympathizers and mentors in Kashmir and abroad...for re-inscribing Kashmir on the international agenda as a human rights issue." In stark contrast of the purported allegations of abuses, these investigations concluded the allegations themselves are "grossly exaggerated or invented".

The victims approached the SHRC in 2004 after the police closed the case under Sections 376, 452 and 342 of the Ranbir Penal Code, 1989, registered in Police Station Trehgam as "untraced".

On October 19, 2011, a division bench of SHRC asked the government to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) for re-opening the case in which at least 32 women of the two villages Kunan and Poshpora in North Kashmir's Kupwara district were allegedly gang-raped by army personnel of 4th Rajputana Rifles on intervening night of February 23/24 in

1991. "SIT should be headed by an officer not below the rank of Superintendent of Police," the bench comprising Commission Chairman Justice (Retd.) Syed Bashiruddin Ahmad and Javaid Kawoosa had pronounced.

Reopening of the case has been the long pending demand of the victims and human rights groups in the Kashmir valley. The Commission had also asked the government to prosecute the then Director of Prosecutions for recommending that the case should be closed and ordered a compensation of two Rs.2 lakh each to the victims.

"Right from February 1991, all successive governments and district administrations have been guilty of callous, negligent, insensitive and indifferent attitude towards the victims as if nothing has happened in Kunan-Poshpora on the intervening night of February 23 and 24, 1991," Justice (Retd.) Javeed Kawoosa had said.

"The offenders have been neither taken to a civilian court nor a court martial was initiated. Instead, the case was closed. The investigation was stopped and the files were shelved. This has benefited the offenders," the SHRC observed.

The Commission sought a report from the government after 34 petitioners filed four petitions with the rights panel in 2004.

Khanyar massacre

On May 8, 1991, seven or eight militants and civilians got killed in an encounter with the troops near Saida Kadal. Three of them were taken to Martyrs' graveyard at Khanyar for burial. Thousands of people assembled for the last rites. Meanwhile, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel opened fire from their bunkers leaving 29 dead and 72 wounded.

An eyewitness, Haji Abdul Ahad said: "Around 3:00 pm we heard that some 5-7 militants had died near Khawaja Yarbali Saidakadal and the bodies of three of them were being carried in a procession towards the Martyrs' Graveyard, Khanyar. Thousands of people came out shouting anti-India and pro-freedom slogans. The procession of 20,000 mourners was allowed to move forward near Shiraz Cinema which housed a battalion of CRPF. As soon as the bodies of the three youth, Mohammad Lateef Qadri, Meraj-ud-Din and Javed Ahmed Kathjoo were laid to rest, a patrolling party of CRPF that was coming from Shiraz Cinema, and heading towards Nowhatta, opened fire on the mourners without any provocation. The CRPF troops stationed inside bunkers at three corners of the graveyard also started firing indiscriminately."

Ahad said that firing stopped only after he went up to the nearby mosque and appealed through a mosque loudspeaker to the troops to stop firing at the mourners. "When I saw bodies of children, men and women falling on ground amid bullets and screams I rushed to the nearby mosque of Sheeshgari Mohalla and appealed to the troops to stop firing. But it was

too late and the firing had already left 29 dead and hundreds were injured while jumping over the iron fence of the graveyard to save their lives," Ahad said.

Consequently, an independent inquiry commission headed by Justice (Retd.) Mufti Bahauddin was formed to look into the massacre. The Commission found the troops responsible for killing the civilians, and its findings were made public on June 26, 1991 in a press conference at Hotel Taj, Lal Chowk.

"Although the Commission submitted its report, till date no one knows what happened to its findings and whether the Government of India took some action against its troops," Riyaz, a resident of Koolipora, Khanyar said.

Some of the civilians killed in the massacre include Mohammad Shafi Sheikh of Khawaja Yarbala, Saidakadal, Haji Ali Mohammad Sofi of Sheeshgari Mohalla, Khanyar, Khati Begum of Sheeshgari Mohalla, Khanyar, Fatima of Rozbal, Khanyar, Nazir Ahmed of Abi Nowpora, Abdul Samad Khatana of Kupwara, Shameema Akhtar, aged 12, of Mughal Mohalla, Rainawari, Ghulam Qadir of Batmaloo, Manzoor Ahmed Khan of Nayidyaar, Rainawari, Ghulam Mohammad Shugoo of Rainawari, Mukhtar Ahmed, Abdul Rashid Khan of Khanyar, Hafizullah Bhat of Ganderbal, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh of Khanyar, Khursheed Ahmed Chesti of Umar Colony, Lal Bazaar, and Mohammad Maqbool Ganai of Sheeshgari Mohalla, Khanyar.

Chotta Bazar killings

On June 11, 1991 the CRPF posted near Government Medical College (GMC) at Karan Nagar went berserk. Blood in their eyes they fired at shopkeeper and passersby. By the time guns stopped oozing bullets, twenty-eight persons including women and children had died. To this day the cause of the firing could not be ascertained. The militants had opened fire on a CRPF group near Zaina Kadal around one kilometer from the area. It is believed several CRPF men sustained injuries. That could be the reason for the CRPF firing around GMC.

According to eyewitnesses, the CRPF men came out around 6 p.m. and opened fire. 'Two GMC watchmen fell to their bullets. Then they barged into the shops adjacent to the GMC gate and killed a doctor. This was only the beginning. They stopped vehicles near National School and killed three drivers, several passersby including a 75-year-old woman. A young boy from Nawab Bazar was dragged out of a cab and shot dead.

The next target was a motor garage. They forced entry into the garage and killed its head mechanic and his assistant."

Another eyewitness, a shopkeeper said the CRPF men barged into his shop. "An officer fired at me. However, the gun got locked. He ordered his men to sprinkle gun powder on me. I sustained serious injuries and remained bed ridden for more than a year", he said.

A senior police officer while talking to a local news agency said that all the victims were innocent civilians.

The state government ordered a probe. Justice Mufti Jalal-ud-Din headed the enquiry of commission. He was assisted by Jaleel Andrabi Advocate. However, after Jaleel's killing and Justice Jalal-ud-Din's transfer, the enquiry died down.

A criminal case under section 302 RPC stands registered against the culprits in Karan Nagar police station. However, the file has been consigned to records.

Man in flames

It only happens on the silver screen. But that day it happened in the world famous apple town, Sopore. A man engulfed in flames ran for his life as two men in uniform watched with amusement. The man, however, defeated the flames with the help of a daring lady. He survived. After seventeen years he narrated his daring escape from certain death.

Abdul Ahad Mir was eagerly waiting for a customer in his cloth shop in Sopore's main market on January 6, 1993. A few rounds were fired and in a jiffy guns started trotting. People ran for their lives and the town wore a deserted look. People accuse the Border Security Force (BSF) of torching the entire market. Abdul Ahad confirms this. He said: "I saw people running for their lives. Several people fell to BSF bullets. I decided not to go out of my shop. I hid myself underneath a counter. Meanwhile, two BSF men entered my shop."

Mir paused for a moment. Perhaps he recalled the moment and shivered. "The BSF men talked to each other. There is nobody inside. Let us set the shop ablaze", he heard them saying. The duo started making a pile of cloth rolls on the counter beneath which Mir was hiding. The pile of clothes was torched. In a moment the entire shop was in flames. "I did not want to char myself beyond recognition in the shop. I decided to die on the road. But when I came out from beneath the counter my clothes caught fire. On the road, I saw two BSF men laughing at me. Most probably they thought I was going to die anyway;

therefore, they did not shoot me", he said.

Mir did not know where he was going. Suddenly, someone threw water on him. The flames extinguished. "I looked up and saw a lady with a bucket in her hand in a narrow lane of Muslim Peer area of the devastated town", he said. The entire town was placed under curfew but a team of doctors from Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) reached Mir to save him. Mir was later treated at SKIMS.

He goes to his shop regularly but the horrifying experiences of that day still haunt him.

It all started when militants fired at a BSF party at Mohallah Baba Yusuf Lane on January 6, 1993 killing two of them on the spot. The militants also decamped with a SLR (self loading rifle) of a deceased soldier. This angered the BSF men. They opened indiscriminate fire killing 60 people. At least 300 shops and 100 houses were torched

Police strike

The police mutiny had created a storm in Kashmir. I happened to come across Kashmir's renowned lawyer, Zaffar Shah at Lal Chowk. We went inside a restaurant to have tea. Meanwhile, a man came in. He came towards us and fell on Shah's feet. "Please save me. I am in great trouble", he said, Zaffar tried to console him but he was in very bad shape. Finally, Shah handed him over to me. I was told to give him company. I could not say no.

I took him to my friend's house where we stayed for the night. He sought a paper and pen which my friend's son gave him. He started writing. I went out for a while. Unfortunately, I returned in the evening and found the man still writing. He had wasted hundreds of pages.

Around midnight, I gave him two tablets of Diazepam but he could not sleep. He kept me awake all night. Next morning he told me about the police strike. He was one of the leaders and was hiding to evade arrest. He said he had committed a blunder by taking a police procession to the United Nations Military Observer's Group (UNMOG){IP} at Sonawar.

Narrating his woeful tale, he said: "We launched an indefinite strike on April 22, 1993 to protest the death of a local constable killed by the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel. We have decided not to carry out our duties until Srinagar's Senior Superintendent of Police, K. Rajendra Kumar resigned."

The dispute, he said, erupted on April 22 after the body of a local constable, Reyaz Ahmed, was brought to Srinagar by the

BSF men, "He had been picked up during a search operation on April 21 from Hazratbal area", he said.

"The policemen urged Kumar to intervene, but he told the border guards that he (Reyaz) should be taught a lesson. This was a clear hint to the border guards that Reyaz should be killed in custody" he said.

After Reyaz's body was brought to Srinagar, hundreds of Kashmir policemen brandished their weapons and chanted: "We want justice." Shots were fired but there were no casualties, he added.

We, he said are on the streets since then. "The police men took out a procession and marched towards UNMOG(IP) at Sonawar. They chanted slogans against the government and the police officials", he said.

After completing his woeful tale, he urged me to drop him near Iqbal Park. He was arrested the same evening.

A few days later, the army stormed the Police Control Room and disarmed the striking policemen. The policemen offered no resistance.

Bijbehara massacre

The Hazratbal Siege evoked severe response from the people across Kashmir. On October 22, 1993, the people of Bijbehara also came out on the Srinagar-Jammu highway to protest the siege. They chanted pro-freedom slogans and demanded an immediate end to the siege. The BSF (Border Security Force) men manning the highway opened unprovoked and indiscriminate fire killing around 40 persons on the spot. Scores sustained injuries. The government response added salt to injury. "The BSF party opened fire when militants fired at them." A government enquiry, however, indicted the BSF but the National Human Rights Commission dismissed the case without dispensing justice.

It was Friday and after finishing the congregational prayers around 15000 people assembled in the courtyard of Jamia Masjid to register their protest against the army siege. A procession then started marching through various streets shouting slogans for the ending of the siege and in support of Kashmir's freedom. When the procession reached the main road that divides the town, there was a large contingent of the BSF. As the whole procession reached the top of the road in the Gooriwan locality, the BSF personnel blocked the street in which the protesters had assembled and started to fire indiscriminately in retaliation on them, killing at least 37 people on the spot and injuring more than 200 others. The firing continued for nearly ten minutes with the troops targeting the crowd and those who lay injured on the ground. No ambulances or medical staff was allowed access to those who were lying on the ground, even though the hospital was

only a few yards away from the site of the massacre. According to doctors posted in the hospital, most of the people could have been saved had the ambulances and medical aid been allowed to reach the victims. Later, when people did manage to take some of the injured away into the hospital, the BSF personnel even fired at them inside the hospital complex, killing and injuring more people.

The police later registered First Information Report (FIR) No.: 90/1993 under section 302 and 307 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC). However, no arrests were effected.

The official version stated that "the government announces with regret the Bijbehara killings which were as a consequence of the fire opened by the militants on a road-opening party". This theory of militant attack was duly supported by two premier Indian news agencies. These agencies also falsely spread news reports that many of the dead were militants who were involved in various previous militant activities, including killings and attacks on the paramilitary forces. These false reports were carried, and given prominent space, by all the Indian newspapers and other media outlets.

Soon after the news of the massacre went out the Indian government barred independent local and international media persons from entering into the town. On October 23, 1993 when a large number of local and foreign media people converged on the town, the army used violence and shot in the air to stop them from visiting the old side of the town and the newly dug "martyrs graveyard". The army even attacked mourners in the graveyard that were burying their dead from the carnage.

The enquiry report, vide no. EN/BFC/93/23-24, prepared by the enquiry Magistrate and submitted to the government on November 13, 1993, concluded that "firing upon the procession was absolutely unprovoked and the claim made by

the security forces that they were forced to retaliate the firing of militants for self-defence is baseless and concocted". The Magistrate's report further stated that: "The security personnel have committed offence out of vengeance and their barbarous act was deliberate and well planned". The report indicts Deputy Commandant of the BSF, J.K. Radola, for "tacit approval given by him to the indiscriminate and unprovoked firing".

The victims still await justice.

Kupwara massacre

On January 26, 1994, Kupwara town observed shutdown. January 26 happens to be the Republic Day of India. The soldiers were enraged. To avenge the shutdown, the soldiers of Punjab Regiment led by 2nd Lieutenant, S. Bakshi opened unprovoked and indiscriminate fire near the bus stand. Twenty seven civilians fell to the bullets. Scores sustained injuries.

The police registered a case; First Information Report (FIR) No: 19/94 under sections 302, 307 and 149 of the Ranbir Penal Code, 1989. During investigations, the police recorded the statements of a number of witnesses. They held the said unit of the army responsible for the killings. The police sought details of the officers and personnel deputed for road opening on that day. However, no information was furnished. A reply was received from the concerned unit of the army stating that a court of inquiry had been constituted in the case. However, no information about the inquiry was furnished. The case was finally closed as "untraced" in April 1997 when repeated communications for information were ignored by the army.

The case was agitated in the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) by International Forum for Justice (IFJ) Chairman, Mohammad Ahsan Untoo. On January 28, 2013 the SHRC listed the case for final arguments on March 11. The order was made after Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Government of India submitted a report of the Inspector General of Police, Criminal Investigations Department, Jammu Kashmir along with the covering letter of the Director General of Police.

However, the city of Srinagar was placed under curfew on March 11 and the case could not be heard. The SHRC then fixed the case for hearing on April 17, 2013.

Paper tiger

In response to New Delhi's offer of secret talks to the Hurriyat Conference in December 4, 2011, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) sought clarifications from the government of India. "The Prime Minister appears too vague about his Kashmir plans. He should make it clear as it is a question of our sovereignty. There is a Parliament resolution about Kashmir," BJP's Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Arun Shourie said.

The Resolution was unanimously adopted and unanimously passed on February 22, 1994. It reads:

"This House notes with deep concern Pakistan's role in imparting training to the terrorists in camps located in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, the supply of weapons and funds, assistance in infiltration of trained militants, including foreign mercenaries into Jammu and Kashmir with the avowed purpose of creating disorder, disharmony and subversion;

Reiterates that the militants trained in Pakistan are indulging in murder, loot and other heinous crimes against the people, taking them hostage and creating an atmosphere of terror;

Condemns strongly the continued support and encouragement Pakistan is extending to subversive and terrorist activities in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir;

Calls upon Pakistan to stop forth with its support to terrorism, which is in violation of the Simla Agreement and the internationally accepted norms of inter-state conduct and is the root cause of tension between the two countries and

reiterates that the Indian political and democratic structures and the Constitution provide for firm guarantees for the promotion and protection of human rights of all its citizens; Regard Pakistan's anti-India campaign of calumny and falsehood as unacceptable and deplorable;

Notes with deep concern the highly provocative statements emanating from Pakistan and urges Pakistan to refrain from making statements which vitiate the atmosphere and incite public opinion;

Expresses regret and concern at the pitiable conditions and violations of human rights and denial of democratic freedoms of the people in those areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which are under the illegal occupation of Pakistan;

On behalf of the People of India,

Firmly declares that-

(a) The State of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and shall be an integral part of India and any attempts to separate it from the rest of the country will be resisted by all necessary means:

(b) India has the will and capacity to firmly counter all designs against its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity; and demands that -

(c) Pakistan must vacate the areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which they have occupied through aggression; and resolves that -

(d) All attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of India will be met resolutely."

BJP's hard talk evoked a debate here although the offer of talks was almost ignored. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader, Muzaffar Husain Baig said New Delhi must rescind the resolution as a confidence building measure.

While addressing a seminar on Self-rule he said: "Centre has to roll back several Constitutional Articles extended to Jammu and Kashmir. Article 1, in Indian constitution vis-a-vis Schedule 1 regarding Jammu and Kashmir must be rolled back.

Besides Article 372 and Section 4 of Jammu and Kashmir Constitution also need to be rolled back," said Beigh. About the resolution by Indian Parliament in 1994 which states that India will take back "Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)" from Pakistan, Beigh said, "It is a paper tiger. India must roll back this resolution as well. Neither India nor Pakistan can take Kashmir controlled by each other. India should give up its claim on AJK."

Similar views have been expressed by renowned jurist, A.G. Noorani in one of his articles in Frontline.

The resolution, he said, however, is as irrelevant as the Lok Sabha's resolution of November 14, 1962, on China, which affirmed a resolve "to drive out the aggressor".

A resolution of Parliament is not law (*Stockdale v. Hansard*, 1839, 9A & E1 and *Bowles v. Bank of England*, 1913, 1 ch. 57). S.A. de Smith's Constitutional and Administrative Law holds that such a resolution "has no legal effect outside the walls of Parliament...unless given such an effect by Act of Parliament".

Pickets removed

The army laid siege to the Hazratbal shrine on October 14, 1993 when a few suspected militants sought refuge in the shrine. The siege continued for quite some time and fueled massive protests across Kashmir forcing the authorities to lift the siege. However, some bunkers erected during the siege were not touched. This became an issue and the leadership was pushed to the wall. They wanted to do something to ensure resumption of prayers in the revered shrine.

Islamic Students League (ISL) was not happy with the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). It (ISL) had been denied a berth in the executive council of the conglomerate notwithstanding its strength and popularity. On the contrary some organizations that comprised a handful of members enjoyed the executive council berth. The ISL was in the general council and its representative would often take the leaders to task for one reason or the other. This was the time when the leaders were chalking out a strategy of freeing the revered shrine of the security pickets. A programme was okayed but the ISL representative criticized it. The organization also went public on the issue. However, this was taken serious note of by the leaders. ISL was asked to give a programme. I was then pursuing my masters in Mass Communications and Journalism in Kashmir University. A friend who represented ISL in the APHC called on me. We sat below a chinar tree in Naseem Bagh. He apprised me of the development. He sought my help. He also wanted to expose the "papertigers" in the conglomerate.

I sought some time. That evening I wrote the following lines. Nobody contests the importance of the shrine. The security pickets around the shrine that prevent people from offering prayers can be projected as "curbs on religion" internationally. Let us work on that. A besieged Dargah has the potential to keep Kashmir in international news. But if the leadership wants the pickets removed then we have to resort to direct action. ISL will provide 1000 volunteers. Other organizations will provide 100 or 50 volunteers each depending upon their strength. We will form a "task force". This force will go to Haratbal on a specified day and remove the pickets."

Next day, the ISL representative came and I handed over the paper to him. He smiled. I told him that the leaders will not accept it for obvious reasons. But to my surprise, they decided to go ahead with the programme. A day was also fixed and one of the leaders suggested that all volunteers shall march towards Dargah wearing shrouds.

The ISL man rushed to me with the "shocking" news. We had a hearty laugh but he seemed worried. "Don't worry. Be there with your boys and get a huge banner depicting the name of your organization. The police and the para-military forces will storm them 10-15 meters from the Mirwaiz Manzil which then housed the APHC headquarters." This is exactly what happened. The leaders and some volunteers were beaten to pulp.

A few months later in June 1994, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Yasin Malik entered the shrine with his four associates, Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Mohammad Yunus Jan (who has since passed away) and Mohammad Yasin Khan. They stayed inside the shrine for a couple of days and observed hunger strike. This had an impact. Prominent civil society members from India rushed to Srinagar. The pickets were removed.

Chrar-e-Sharief gutted

Heavens fell on May 11, 1995. The shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (RA) at Chrar-e-Sharief was destroyed in a mysterious fire. The army and the militants have been accusing each other for the carnage. Amid accusations and counter accusations, the truth has become a casualty. The people may never know as to who committed the act of sacrilege on a day when Muslims offer sacrifice to invoke divine blessings.

Militant commander Mast Gul and his men were in the town since 1994. According to locals, the then Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Budgam visited the area and called on Mast Gul. He was playing cricket with his men in the shrine lawns. He told the CMO to get medicines in bulk. "It's going to be very tough here," he informed the CMO. Abdul Majid (name changed) while narrating the incident said, "A dispensary was also set up in the house of brother of then MLA Abdul Qayoom."

Residents of Charar believe that a secret pact between the militants and the troops was in force upto March 3, 1995. Asim Assadi, a human rights activist said: "As per the terms and conditions of the pact, the Border Security Force (BSF) had to send supplies to Yusmarg in three trucks. On March 3, 1995 the schools reopened after winter vacation. It was a Friday and people were busy making preparations for congregational prayers. The BSF violated the pact and sent a number of trucks to Yusmarg. On the way back, the convoy was attacked by the militants from Naful Teng (an elevation where devotees offer optional prayers). It is believed that the funeral prayers of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din^{RA} were offered at this place. The fire

returned which left three women dead. The next day, the residents saw the soldiers in a different mood. The employees who left the town for their offices were stopped near the Radar Station. They were told to evacuate women and children from the town. It became clear that the troops would storm the town any time. People started evacuating their families in the following days. In a week very few people were left in the town," Asim said, adding, "The troops started asking people about number of militants in the town."

The town was cordoned off. The army sealed the town by deploying soldiers at Alamdar Colony, Wazabagh, Telesara and Hathru Batpora. "On May 8, 1995, except the shrine and Gulshan Abad, the entire town was damaged in a mysterious fire. Nobody knows how the fire started. Nobody saw troops or militants torching houses. However, a helicopter surveyed the area repeatedly. Sometimes it flew so low that the militants would fire at it," Asim said.

During the intervening night of May 10 and 11, 1995, the Gulshan Abad area, Khankah, and the mausoleum also caught fire. The relics including the walking stick of the revered saint, his slippers, gown, a wooden cup and a copy of the Holy Quran also got damaged in the fire.

Years after the carnage, many questions still remain unanswered. How did fire start from Khankah, the shrine and Gulshan Abad area simultaneously when there is a distance of 300 meters between the three structures? Similarly, there is a distance of about 50 meters between Khankah and the shrine. How did flames engulf the two structures simultaneously? The huge central market had adequate fire gaps in between. But the entire market was gutted in a jiffy?

Hostage drama

Six foreign tourists, Donald Hutchings (American), John Childs (American) Keith Mangan and Paul Wells (British), Dirk Hasert (German) and Hans Ostro (Norwain) were abducted by an unknown outfit, Al Faran on July 4, 1995 from Aru, a health resort in South Kashmir, a few kilometers from the valley of Shepherds, Pahalgam.

Hans Ostro was executed a few days after captivity and the police recovered his beheaded body. John Childs somehow managed escape and was rescued by a reconnaissance helicopter.

A militant, Nazar Muhammad alias Masood arrested from downtown Srinagar on May 7, 1996 disclosed that the hostages had been executed following orders from the commanders of the Al Faran outfit. The execution story, however, had many loose ends, the biggest being the failure of the authorities to recover the bodies of the hostages even after the militant identified the "burial site" in Kokernag area of South Kashmir. The execution theory also did not find takers among the State intelligence department who said the hostages had been sighted as late as March 1996.

Soon after, an investigating team comprising Scotland Yard and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) men, assisted by trained German Shepherd dogs, who scanned the so-called burial site, also drew blank.

The hostage drama took a significant turn on December 4, 1995 when the army, acting on specific information closed in on village Dabran in Anantnag district to get the hostages

released. The encounter, which later described by the army as a "routine operation not aimed at rescuing the hostages", resulted in the death of the Commander-in-Chief of the outfit, Abdul Hamid Turki. However, Turki managed to keep the army at bay till his comrades escaped from the village along with the hostages.

Immediately after this encounter, Al Faran stated that the hostages were taken away by the army and also that the group henceforth owed no responsibility for their safety. Since December 4, 1995, there has been a virtual tight lid on information about the movement of the hostages. Both army and Al Faran have been accusing each other of eliminating the hostages.

Al Faran had earlier snapped talks with the State police officials who were negotiating with them over wireless. The transcript of these talks was leaked to a news magazine much to the annoyance of Al Faran. Immediately after this incident, Al Faran not only snapped links with the State police but "lost faith in the genuineness of the dialogue being carried out with them". A spokesman of the outfit while commenting on the attitude of the police said: "They are only buying time and we shall not allow them that."

Meanwhile, stories appeared in newspapers that a cash deal had actually been struck with Al Faran and that money was going to change hands in Pakistan administered Kashmir, literally closed the fate of the hostages.

The relatives of the hostages visited Kashmir several times. Match boxes with photographs of the hostages were widely distributed. They also promised cash awards but all in vain. On August 4, 1996, wives of Keith and Don Hutchings, Julie and Jane addressed a press conference in Srinagar. The aggrieved ladies said: "We have not lost hope. We need concrete information about our husbands' condition and whereabouts."

Earlier a Parliamentary delegation from Germany comprising Vera Lengsfed, Johannes Selle and brother of Dirk Hasser, Bernd Hessert addressed the media persons. They said: "We have brought with us two lakh signatures of people expressing sympathy with Kashmiris and appealing for prompt release of the hostages."

Wives of Donald Hutchings and Schelly also addressed a press conference on June 26, 1996. "Holding four innocent tourists hostage serves no purpose. It is against the glorious traditions of Islam", they said.

The authorities accompanied by experts from US and Europe exhumed scores of graves in South Kashmir. DNA samples were also taken but the mystery remains unsolved to this day.

Al Faran vanished after December 4, 1995. However, it resurfaced in 2001 banning newly launched organizations.

This is what has been appearing in the press.

The actual story was unveiled on March 29, 2012, in a book titled "*The Meadow, Kashmir 1995 – Where the terror began*", published by Harper Press, by authors Adrian Levy and Cathy Scott-Clark that was released in the United Kingdom. This book provides the missing information, based on extensive analysis of a Crime Branch investigation that had been carried out on the kidnappings. This book states that the four persons kidnapped had been killed in the remote twin villages of Mati and Gawran, an approximately five hour drive from Anantnag town, on December 24, 1995. Specifically, and as reported by the *Asian Age* on April 3, 2012, and *Greater Kashmir* and *Rising Kashmir* on April 4, 2012, the four hostages were shot and buried "a good, hard walk behind the lower village."

The book further states that a western female trekker had approached the Rashtriya Rifles camp at Chandanwari, Pahalgam, to say she had witnessed the kidnapping of Dirk

Hasert. Instead of assisting her, a Rashtriya Rifles Major sexually assaulted her. Senior officers had been sent into the mountains to silence her and investigate the Major.

The Crime Branch team investigating the case was provided with surveillance images of the victims while they had been hostage. These images were provided to them by the Indian Research and Analysis Wing [RAW]. The Crime Branch team sent an urgent report on this information to their superiors. The intelligence services and the army, while in possession of this information, took no action. Throughout this time, the families of the kidnapped persons were being informed that there was no information on the location of the kidnapped persons. Subsequently, on numerous occasions, false information on sightings of the kidnapped persons was provided to the public and families of the kidnapped persons.

Ghulam Nabi Mir alias Alpha, a militiaman connected to state agencies, from Shelpora, Anantnag District, had signed a secret ceasefire agreement with Javid Ahmed Bhat alias Sikander, the main abductor prior to the kidnappings, and was told by the Special Task Force (STF), and army and intelligence handlers to pass on weapons and explosives to Javid Ahmed Bhat and his partners. This was part of a larger plan that used Javid Ahmed Bhat and his partners against the Hizbul Mujahideen. This was the reason why the pro-government militiamen in the area, who had knowledge of the whereabouts of the kidnappers and the hostages, had not intervened. The police STF, backed by a faction within the Indian Intelligence Agencies, and with the knowledge of counter-insurgency specialists of the Rashtriya Rifles had known about the deal from the very beginning, and in fact, the idea for such a ceasefire agreement had come from the security forces.

On December 1, 1995 the hostages were handed over by

Al Faran to Ghulam Nabi Mir alias Alpha for four lakh rupees. The December 4, 1995 operation, where three of the kidnappers were killed and two captured, was an ambush that was set up by Ghulam Nabi Mir calling Abdul Hamid al-Turki alias "the Turk" for a meeting.

The four kidnapped persons were killed in the remote twin villages of Mati and Gawran (and specifically, behind the lower village), about a five hour drive from Anantnag town, on December 24, 1995. Their bodies were buried in a hole.

The death of Javid Ahmed Bhat alias Sikander on February 17, 1996, while alleged to be an accident was in fact a planned operation set up by soldiers and Ghulam Nabi Mir alias Alpha.

The kidnappers demanded the release of 21 persons including Maulana Masood Azhar, Sajjad Shahid Khan alias "the Afghani", and Nasrullah Mansoor Langrial alias "Darwesh".

The day that shook Fourth Estate

It was a pleasure to receive Mushtaq Ali the smiling videographer at my friend's residence at Magarmal Bagh where a feast was hosted in connection with his Walima on September 7, 1995. Renowned journalist Yusuf Jameel and photographer Habib Naqash were also among the invitees. Mushtaq had a hearty meal. Little did we know that it was his last meal? Suddenly someone informed the scribes that the foreign tourists who had been taken hostage by Al Faran were spotted. Yusuf Jameel, Mushtaq Ali and other scribes rushed to their respective offices. I urged Mushtaq to have a plate of phirni (a sort of pudding) before leaving. He did not agree. Had he taken it, he would not have fallen to the parcel bomb. But then death keeps a definite calendar. A person dies when he is destined to die.

While Yusuf and Mushtaq were having lunch, a veiled lady had left a parcel for Jameel at his office, Residency Road. After their arrival in the office, Mushtaq snatched the parcel and started opening it as Jameel and Habib Naqash watched with keen interest. The moment Mushtaq removed the wrappers; the bomb went off leaving all of them injured. Mushtaq sustained critical injuries. Three days later on September 10 he succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Eighteen years have passed but Mushtaq's killers remain untraced. According to Habib Naqash, the police did not even register an FIR. "Had the FIR been registered, the police would have definitely approached me for my statement", he said.

Six foreign tourists, Donald Hutchings (American), John Childs (American) Keith Mangan, Paul Wells (British), Dirk Hasert (German) and Hans Ostro (Norwain) were abducted by an unknown outfit, Al Faran on July 4, 1995 from Aru, a health resort in South Kashmir, a few kilometers from the valley of Shepherds, Pahalgam.

Hans Ostro was executed a few days after captivity and the police recovered his beheaded body. John Childs somehow managed escape and was rescued by a reconnaissance helicopter.

Jaleel the martyr

Major Avtar Singh is dead but justice is still awaited in the Jaleel Andrabi murder case. Justice may never be done but Jaleel did after his death what he could not do during his life time. Jaleel was my senior in the Bar and I admired him for a variety of reasons. He had filed a petition on behalf of my detained friend. Besides seeking my friend's release, Jaleel chose to challenge the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) as well. The petition was forgotten. A disturbed Jaleel mourned the helplessness of the judiciary. His colleagues consoled him. But after his death, he succeeded in bringing it to the fore.

In a bold confession, the former Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) of Budgam admitted in open court that the judiciary had failed to administer justice in this case. The learned judge observed: "The complainant party seems to be now justified in leveling aspersions against the court for its inability to procure the attendance of the accused." This is the first time in the history of humankind when a judge expressed his helplessness in the courtroom.

By this time the police had information about his (Major Avtar's) whereabouts. On September 26, 2007 a written communication was received on behalf of Rashtriya Rifles (RR) 34 (JAT) which disclosed Major Avtar's whereabouts as TA-42277 Major Avtar Singh, S/O Ex Subedar Major (Hony Lt) Amar Singh, Village Ponti, PO- Mandhar, Tehsil Jagadhari, District Yamuna Nagar (HR). However, the communication did not reveal the present address of the accused.

The police also received two more documents:

No:CRB/WSD/07/11682-84 dated July 26, 2007 and No: CRS/364/07-13442-43 dated August 3, 2007. After perusal of the said documents, the court came to know that Major Avtar Singh was staying in Canada as per the information of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

The CJM took strong note of the State's failure to produce the accused in court. He held: "It is very astounding that the State of Jammu Kashmir despite being posted with the whereabouts of the accused is not taking effective steps in the matter for ensuring the production of the accused in this court."

Had the erring Major been extradited, the situation would have been different. According to noted lawyer and renowned human rights defender, Parvez Imroz, Major Avtar could have skipped trial in a civil court by expressing his will to face court martial. By exercising this option he could have saved himself. But what is destined to happen happens. Avtar killed himself and his family. He paid a heavy price for murdering Jaleel.

The Indian State has not only been shielding its agents through draconian laws but also resorts to foul play to hamper the administration of justice. The Special Investigation Team set up by the High Court identified Major Avtar posted in Rawalpura Camp of the 103 Territorial Army as *prima facie* responsible for Jaleel's death. However, the army representatives told the High Court that the Major was not employed by the army any longer and that he had not committed the offence in his official capacity. This was a loaded statement - in fact an admission that men in uniform at times commit offences in their official capacity. This is exactly what the human rights defenders have been saying for the past two decades.

The overt and covert methods to shield Avtar did not end here. Despite court orders to the contrary, he was provided travel documents to escape from India. Extradition

proceedings were never initiated. Even Amnesty International appeal for Avtar's extradition was ignored.

The State Government having registered a First Information Report (FIR) was under a legal, moral and constitutional obligation to seek Avtar's extradition. But, nothing moved. The erring Major was arrested in US in early 2012 for a domestic dispute. His wife while lodging a complaint revealed vital information about him to the US police. Now the Jammu Kashmir Police had his whereabouts and this was the time when it should have pressed for his extradition.

Gullible Kashmiris were told that a police team had been sent to New Delhi for the Major's extradition. The Chief Minister also informed the Legislative Assembly that papers for Major's extradition had been prepared. But this was a blatant lie. No team had been sent to Delhi and no papers had been prepared.

The erring Major has killed his innocent family members. They were killed for whose fault? Who is responsible for their killing? Will New Delhi and the Jammu Kashmir Government accept responsibility?

Jaleel-ul-Qadr Andrabi was born to Syed Ghulam Qadir Andrabi of Ratnipora, Pulwama on January 30, 1960. Jaleel was a brilliant student and joined the Department of Law, University of Kashmir in 1982 to crush dissent.

While pursuing his Bachelors in Law, the university authorities deployed police in the campus. The students registered strong protest. Jaleel and many others were suspended. Later, they were asked to apologize. Jaleel refused to apologize and approached Muzaffar Husain Beig for legal help. Impressed by Jaleel's brilliance, Beig urged him to join his firm as his junior. Jaleel worked with him for some time and in 1987 established his own chamber.

Jaleel was arrested by the police for protesting Maqbool Bhat's hanging in Delhi's Tihar Jail on February 11, 1984. He

was severely tortured. After his release, he vowed to work for the welfare of detainees. He filed a petition in the High Court and succeeded in seeking a landmark judgment. The relatives of the detainees were allowed to meet their detained wards every fortnight.

Taking cognizance of another of Jaleel's petition, the High Court directed the government to form review committees in every district for reviewing the cases of detainees. The order is still in force with some modifications.

In 1995, Jaleel challenged the Governor's powers of lodging Kashmiri detainees in jails outside the territorial jurisdiction of the State High Court. Jaleel quoted this order while addressing the session of the United Nations Sub-commission on Human Rights at Geneva in 1995.

He was also invited by the US based Kashmir American Council in the same year. He participated in conferences, seminars and debates during his stay in the US and apprised the world community of the pros and cons of the Kashmir dispute.

According to people close to Jaleel, he came under the government scanner for his activities in Geneva and America. He was fully aware of the danger to his life.

Andrabi was arrested by a party of Territorial Army led by Major Avtar Singh on March 8, 1996 near Rawalpura when he was driving home. The arrest evoked severe reaction from all quarters. The Bar Association agitated the matter and the local press highlighted the issue.

While people started believing that Jaleel like many others had been subjected to enforced disappearance, his body surfaced near Zero Bridge from the depths of River Jehlum on March 26, 1996.

Acknowledging his contribution to human rights in Kashmir, the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) conferred the Robert Thorp award on him in 2006. The Government of Pakistan also conferred Hilal-e-Imtiaz on Jaleel in 2001.

When I was summoned

I had cultivated credible sources in the Hurriyat headquarters, Rajbagh. I often filed stories on the internal bickering of the amalgam much to the discomfort of the leaders. The elections for chairman were due. I came to know from sources that Mirwaiz would find it very difficult to get re-elected for the second consecutive term. I filed the story. The leak was taken very seriously by the leaders.

Next day Muhammad Yaqoub Vakil, a leader of Awami Action Committee (AAC) came to my office to know the source of my story. He threatened me of dire consequences incase I did not give the information. I also lost my cool. "Who are you to question me? Let the executive council of the Hurriyat Conference call me", I shouted at him. He left but not before giving me a scornful look.

Same evening I was told to effect my presence before the executive council of the conglomerate. The date and time was also conveyed to me. I wondered. What has happened to them? How can they afford to waste their time like this?

I could have ignored the 'order' but decided to effect my presence on the specified day and time. As expected, I was not greeted this time by the usual smiles. The executive members, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat, Moulana Abbas Ansari, Late Abdul Ghani Lone, and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq were angry. Yasim Malik was the only person who behaved normally. In fact, Malik was in the eye of the storm as well. He was suspected of leaking 'vital' information to me. I was told to disclose my source in the Hurriyat headquarters.

I refused. "If you have leaks in your house, you better plug them", I replied. The boldness I was displaying was too much for them. I could feel that some of them were on the brink of losing their nerves.

Moulana Ababs Ansari and Late Abdul Ghani Lone were my father's close friends. They would call on him almost every week. While Lone Sahib watched me keenly, Moulana Ansari offered an uncalled for explanation. "He called me last week to know about a Quranic verse", he said. I had called him a week earlier when we were preparing for a special issue of Greater Kashmir on Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW).

On the contrary Lone Sahib encouraged me by whispering in Professor Bhat's ears. The pitch of the whisper was deliberately kept high enough for me. "Why was he summoned here?" The whisper emboldened me. There was an adjective prefixed to this whisper and that conveyed to me that I was going well.

I was severely questioned. Mirwaiz said: "We know the person who feeds lies to you. He is a petty employee here. We will set him right." He was right. He knew the person but needed confirmation from me.

My interrogation lasted two hours. While answering their questions, I also pointed out their shortcomings. This only added fuel to the fire. By this time, I had started enjoying the 'historic encounter'.

Finally I was asked to leave. I stood up and walked slowly towards the door. "Zahir Sahib, Humay umeed hai ki aayinda aap kuch nahi likhangay." (Zahir, we hope you will refrain from writing on Hurriyat Conference in the future). It was Syed Ali Geelani. I turned back and said: "Gealni Sahib, main likhoonga aur bohat teez likhoonga". (I will continue to write hard).

A renegade's "sacrifice"

Javed Shah was a government gunman. He never said he was a proud Indian. And people close to him know how his son ridiculed him for shifting loyalties. But New Delhi in consideration of his services urged the State Government to gift a berth to him in the upper house of the State Legislature. Javed became an MLC (Member of Legislative Council).

Javed's fellow MLC and former militant commander, Firdous Sayed alias Baber Badr during an interview with the author talked about his association with Javed Shah.

He said: "One day I came out of the house (assembly hall) to smoke. Javed was already in the lobby having a fag. He shouted at me. I did not like his attitude. He was not behaving like a legislator. Anyway, I responded to his call and went to him. He looked very gloomy. I sat beside him. He poured his heart out. What he said turned me almost numb."

After coming from school yesterday, Javed's son talked to him. He was very serious and had the most uncomfortable conversation with his father that evening. "Dad will you mind if I change my parentage in the school records?" The question was sudden and direct. Javed could not utter a word for a moment. With great difficulty, he pulled himself together and managed a "why?" with difficulty. The answer was as shocking as the question. "My friends tell me your father is a renegade, a killer, a criminal and an Indian. I will be spared of the humiliation if I change my parentage."

Javed had no answer. He could not sleep that night and was

now lightening his burden in the lobby of the Legislative Assembly. Fortunately, he found a patient listener in Firdous Sayed.

"We are offering a huge sacrifice by being on this side of the fence. Will the Indians ever acknowledge this?" he asked. Firdous Sayed was lost in thoughts. He never forgot the encounter. It had a deep impact and, according to Sayed, one of the reasons for his "home coming".

Wandhama massacre

With the police having failed to trace out the killers, the Wandhama massacre has been consigned to records. Yet another mysterious page has been added to Jammu Kashmir's beleaguered history. Justice remains a casualty.

The 27th night of the Holy month of Ramadhan, Muslims believe, is better than 1000 months. On this night people change, their lives change and their destiny changes. But in 1998, the blessed night witnessed cold blooded massacre of scores of villagers in a small hamlet in Ganderbal. The inhuman act changed Kashmir for good.

This blessed night fell on January 25 in 1998. In the entire Kashmir valley people were offering prayers in mosques. The Wandhama mosque was also abuzz with religious fervor. Around 11:45 pm wailing women came rushing towards the mosque. And in a jiffy, the blessed night turned into a nightmare for the villagers. Twenty three villagers, all Kashmiri Pandits, had been massacred in cold blood by masked gunmen.

The victims had resisted migration of Pandits in early 90's and decided to stay back in the strife torn valley. The cold blooded massacre evoked severe reaction across Kashmir. People demanded an impartial probe and severe punishment to the culprits responsible for the massacre. The age-old bonds of brotherhood and peaceful co-existence were further damaged. The abode of the saints witnessed yet another migration.

Manoj Kumar Dhar, a 16 year old was the lone eyewitness of

the gruesome incident. He said: "A group of masked gunmen barged into my house at about 11:30 pm and forced the inmates to come out. I jumped out of the wall of my house. As soon as my father, brothers and sisters came out, the gunmen shot them one by one. They cried and begged for life but the masked men showed no mercy. A gunman spotted me and asked me to come out but I hid myself beneath a heap of saw dust stored in the house. They fired indiscriminately in the rooms and at the walls from all sides. Then they left thinking I too was dead. I could not identify them but they were speaking Urdu", he said.

Years have passed but nobody has been brought to justice. The police have failed to identify the killers. The file has been closed and consigned to records. A few days after the incident, the police claimed recovery of a letter from the site of the massacre in which a hitherto unknown organization - Intikaam-ul-Muslimoon, had claimed responsibility of the massacre. The letter, according to the police, was tagged to one of the bullet riddled bodies. The police further said that the people of both the communities in Wandhama blamed the unwise shifting of an army camp from the area a few months before the massacre

Distressed mother

After performing her son's last rites, she went to bed much to the comfort of her relatives. After a while, she came out of her house and walked slowly to a tin shed in her backyard. Out she took a shovel and paused for a moment. She looked behind. Nobody had noticed her. She walked towards the graveyard. However the village chowkidaar (watch man) had seen her. He followed her silently. She was heading towards the graveyard. The watch man grew suspicious. He grabbed her hand. "Leave me. I want to see my son's face." She intended to dig her son's grave to have a look at his face.

The watchman took her to her house and informed the inmates about her intentions. Frightened, they always watched her. But, she repeated the exercise three times. Fortunately every time she was prevented by her family members to reach the graveyard.

Her son, Naseer was killed by Ikhwans (Government backed militants) in 1998 in a Ganderbal village in the vicinity of her locality. The killing affected her nerves adversely. Medicines did not help her. The sages failed to do the needful. Meanwhile, the Counselors of Action Aid International visited the village. The counselors did a good job. After a few counseling sessions, the counselors recommended livelihood support for her. Action Aid gave her a few sheep. She looks after them and this has helped her overcome her problems.

The old lady (name withheld) said: "Previously I would always think of my son. I felt a vacuum in my chest. My relatives did all to console me but my condition worsened with every

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passing day. Now I remain busy with the sheep. I spend the entire day with them. And when I return in the evening, I am too tired to concentrate on anything. After taking food, I go to bed and in a few moments I am fast asleep."

The old lady is all praise for the counselors. "But for their help, I would have taken out my son from his grave", she said.

First Fidayeen Attack

November 3, 1999 was a busy day for all of us in the Greater Kashmir office. Around dusk I was filing a story when *Lashker-e-Toiba* (LeT) commander, Abu Talha Hazari called in the evening. "*Bai Zahir, Main army headquarter ja raha hoon. News follow karna.*" (I am going to army headquarters. Please follow the news).

Hazari used to call us very often. He would tell details of his operations and at times even indulged in gossip. We always wondered why security agencies failed to trace his calls.

I replied: "Ok, I will follow the news." All of us laughed. However, a few minutes later, I urged one of my colleagues to call Major Purushottam. The Major who functioned as Army's PRO (Public Relations Officer) was a friend. He would often come to our office to discuss matters of importance including the security situation. Sometimes he would take us for a ride in his official vehicle.

He responded to my colleague's call in his unique style. He told us that the area was abuzz with Diwali crackers. But, soon we came to know that a group of Fidayeen comprising Abu Talha Hazari and his associates had attacked the army headquarters. The last news we received shocked all of us. The Major had been shot dead!

Noted photographer, H.U. Naqash had gone to army headquarters along with his two colleagues to meet Major Purushottam. It was getting dark. As the Major was entertaining his guests from the fourth estate, guns started trotting. Naqash drew Major's attention towards the firing but

his answer made the journalists smile. "Yeh Diwali kay patakhaay hain" (These are Diwali crackers). But the reality soon dawned on him. It was a Fidayeen attack. Major Purshotam quickly locked Naqash and his colleagues in the bathroom. Meanwhile, the gunmen entered the room and shot Major Purushottam dead.

A group of army men later found them locked in the bath room. "We were ordered by an army officer to lie down. We obeyed and stayed in that position till the operation ended. Then we were taken to a building for questioning. This is when we feared for our lives. The army officer did not trust us. Finally our identity was ascertained and we were set free", Naqasah said.

The Major had laid down his life for saving Naqash and his associates. The fourth estate mourned the death. *Greater Kashmir* published an obituary. It was the first and perhaps the last time when an army officer's obituary appeared in a local daily.

Interestingly Abu Talha managed to escape. He was killed in an encounter at Kursoo, Rajbagh after some time.

Chattisinghpura massacre

Amid shock and utter disbelief, people came to know about the massacre of 34 Kashmiris at Chattisinghpura, a beautiful hamlet in Anantnag district on March 20, 2000. This time the victims were Sikhs.

According to reports, around 15-17 unidentified gunmen wearing army fatigues entered the hamlet. All males including the children were herded towards the local gurudwara. The gunmen then opened fire killing 34 persons in cold blood. Scores sustained injuries. One of the injured later succumbed to his injuries.

The sole survivor of the massacre, Nanak Singh Aulakh, narrated the gruesome tale. "A unit of Rashtriya Rifles stationed nearby failed to intervene during the attack. The attackers wore military uniforms, and were led by a man they addressed as 'Commanding Officer'. As they withdrew, they allegedly shouted Hindu slogans, and left behind bottles of liquor."

The massacre took place on the eve of the US President Bill Clinton's visit to the subcontinent. The Government of India and the State Government were quick to put the blame on Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizbul Mujahideen.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference however, accused the Indian government of carrying out the massacre to discredit the Kashmiri independence movement, while Syed Salahuddin, head of Hizbul Mujahideen said: "Mujahideen have nothing against the Sikh community which sympathizes with our struggle. We assure them that there never was and

there will never be any danger to Sikhs from Kashmiri freedom fighters."

In 2010, the LeT associate David Headley, who was arrested in connection with the 2008 Mumbai attacks, reportedly confessed to the National Investigation Agency that the LeT carried out the Chittisinghpura massacre. He is said to have identified a LeT militant named Muzzamil as part of the group which carried out the killings apparently to create communal tension just before Clinton's visit.

However, the government continues to ignore the demand for a free and fair investigation into the massacre.

In an introduction to a book written by Madeleine Albright titled *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs*, she accused "Hindu militants" of perpetrating the act. Hindu organizations protested the statement, and ultimately the publishers, Harper Collins, edited the statement out of future editions of the book. They acknowledged the error in an email to the *Times of India*.

In August 2000, the Indian government announced that it had captured two Pakistan-based LeT operatives, who in December 2000 allegedly admitted to carrying out the attacks.

An alleged LeT militant, Mohammad Suhail Malik of Sialkot, Pakistan, admitted to participating in the massacre. In an interview with the *New York Times*, he stated that he had been trained in mountain climbing and marksmanship by LeT, and had infiltrated into India in October, 1999 carrying the equivalent of \$200 for expenses.

Malik went on to say that he knew nothing about the plot to kill the Sikhs until he stood in an orchard where the 35 people were killed, and had opened fire because he had been ordered to do so by his commanders. However, in the same article, the author decried the conditions under which the interview was conducted, and expressed doubt about the veracity of the

confession. He stated that Malik gave few details in his answers, primarily repeating information from official police dossiers, and expressed concern that Malik may have been tortured while in custody. At one point in the article he states:

"I wanted to interview the teenager once more, this time without the authorities present. Somehow, I thought I could win his trust, offer him an out, and persuade him that he did not have to confess to the massacre unless it was true.

On August 10, 2011, a Delhi court acquitted Malik and another Pakistani national, Waseem Ahmed, of the charge of involvement in the Chattisinghpura massacre.

The Pathribal killings

Five days after the tragic incident at Chattisinghpura, on March 25, 2000, the soldiers killed five men in Pathribal village of Anantnag district, claiming that the victims were the "foreign militants" responsible for the massacre at Chattisinghpura.

Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range) Dr. A.K. Bhan claimed that his personnel led by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Farooq Khan, in a joint operation with the army, had shot dead the five militants responsible for the Sikh massacre. According to Dr. Bhan, the government forces had surrounded a hut in Panchthalan, near Pathribal, where the terrorists were hiding. The fierce encounter that ensued ended when the shelter, with all five inside, caught fire and was destroyed. The bodies were buried separately without any post-mortem examination.

Meanwhile, the locals started protesting disappearance of five local youth. Soon they began to suspect that the five "terrorists" killed by the soldiers might be the civilians they were looking for.

According to them, 17 men had been detained by the police between March 21 and 24, 2000. Their whereabouts were not

furnished to their relatives. On March 30, 2000, local authorities in Anantnag relented to growing public pressure, and agreed to exhume the bodies. The relatives identified the slain youth as Zahoor Ahmad Dalal, Bashir Ahmad, Mohammed Yousuf Malik, and two other youths, both named Juma Khan.

The State Government returned the bodies to the relatives and suspended SSP Farooq Khan. Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah promised more action, if and when forensic reports proved that the slain men were indeed the five youth.

The Special Investigation Team inquiring into the Pathribal incident approached New Delhi for analysis from the DNA, Fingerprinting and Diagnostics Centre, Hyderabad, and the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Kolkata, and provided medical samples of the relatives to match with those of the slain men. That was in 2000. Two years later, the controversy had faded from public memory when *The Times of India* reported that the samples from the relatives had been substituted with some others, a fact that both forensic centres had conveyed to the State police more than a year ago. "...While the DNA samples purported to have been collected from the relatives did not match those of the DNA isolated from the exhumed bodies, in three cases, the samples of women relatives were found to have come from men," read the *Times of India* report.

Even after this report, senior State Government officials continued to maintain that they had not received any communication from the forensic centres. Dr. Syed E. Hasnain, Director of the Centre for DNA, Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad contradicted the latter claim. "Certainly the report has been sent to the investigating officer (appointed by the Jammu and Kashmir judiciary)", Dr. Hasnain confirmed to *Rediff.com*. "I cannot comment on the fudging... but we stand by what we have said in the report."

Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Kolkata, Director, V.K. Kashyap told the *Time of India*: "We had dashed off a letter to the Jammu and Kashmir government immediately after we found the samples had certain serious discrepancies. Till date we have not received a single reply from either the state authorities or the investigative agency... We finished our investigations way back in December 2000, but how can we submit a report that is meaningless?" "The samples", he added, "were obviously tampered with." After this report was published, the State Government admitted that the centres had written to it, and promised that it would undertake fresh tests.

Dr. Abdullah, after an initial attempt to sidestep the controversy, responded with another inquiry. The Chief Minister told the State Assembly that he was deeply "ashamed there are agencies that can behave in such a manner." He apologized to the Assembly and promised that all those involved in collecting and sending "fake" samples would be immediately suspended. And if found guilty by the one-member Commission of Inquiry he had just appointed, they would be "dismissed and prosecuted", a *Times of India* report quoted him as saying. Blood samples were once again collected from relatives of the five youth and sent to Kolkata and Hyderabad. Jammu Kashmir Chief Secretary Ashok Jaitley, clarified the matter further. "We were naturally taken aback when we read that the samples had been fudged," he told *Rediff.com* on a telephone interview. "The State Government will get to the bottom of this issue, that is why we have appointed Justice G.A. Kuchay, former judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, to inquire." Jaitley said any action against those involved would follow only after the Commission submits its report, which would be within two months.

On March 19, 2012, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

told the Supreme Court of India that the fake encounter at Pathribal in Jammu Kashmir, 12 years ago, in which five people were killed by Army personnel "were cold-blooded murders and the accused officials deserve to be meted out exemplary punishment."

The Brakpora killings

When people did not see any action being taken regarding the promised exhumations and inquiries following the Pathribal killings, public protests grew more strident. On April 3, 2000, a procession of several thousand demonstrators flanked by Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel marched to Anantnag intending to submit a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding the exhumation of the bodies of the five men killed on March 25, 2000, and information about the fate and whereabouts of the 17 people allegedly picked up by security forces after the March 20, 2000, massacre and "disappeared" since.

In the course of the march, some youths threw stones at a police post. After police resorted to lathi charge (beating with sticks), many protesters withdrew. Some 3000 to 4000 people reached Brakpora, three kilometers before Anantnag, where stones were reportedly thrown at the SOG camp. After another brief lathi charge, SOG men and members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) opened apparently indiscriminate fire, killing seven people outright and injuring at least 15 others. A melee ensued in which more participants were injured. After the crowd dispersed, an indefinite curfew was imposed and shoot at sight orders were issued in the entire District. According to some reports, one or two men injured in the firing died later.

Zonal Police Headquarters in the evening stated that members of armed groups had accompanied the protesters and had opened fire on the protesters leading to the deaths. It claimed that a case had been filed against violent protesters

and that investigations had started. Another official statement quoted in the *Kashmir Times* said that the protesters had resorted to stone pelting and as firing in the air did not stop them, security forces opened fire on them. Participants in the march denied that there were any members of armed groups participating in the demonstration.

On April 4, 2000, members of the State Assembly condemned the police firing and angrily demanded an inquiry and punishment of those responsible for the police shooting of seven demonstrators.

The Chief Minister ordered a judicial inquiry by a High Court Judge into the firing incident and also reportedly admitted that excessive use of force had occurred without provocation: "Non-lethal options were not chosen to control the crowd." Similarly Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani reportedly admitted: "It was a tragic incident. It should not have happened." The State Government reportedly transferred the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag and suspended the Deputy Inspector General and the SSP, Anantnag as well as some 20 police officers involved in the shooting incident on April 3, 2000.

A one-man Commission of Inquiry consisting of retired Supreme Court judge Justice S.R. Pandian was set up on April 17, 2000 and notified on May 20, 2000. It was entrusted with investigating the Brakpora firing incident under the Jammu Kashmir Commission of Inquiry Act, 1962. The terms of reference of his inquiry were:

- (a) to inquire into the causes and circumstances leading to the firing incident,
- (b) to establish whether the "use of force used in firing on the crowd was justified",
- (c) to "fix responsibility for using excessive force, if any", and
- (d) to make suggestions for preventing a recurrence of such events in future.

Justice Pandian held the SOG and the CRPF personnel guilty of killings. The Jammu Kashmir Government accepted the Justice Pandian Commission report on the Brakpora police firing on April 3, 2000. The Government ordered suspension of all the police personnel including a SP and two Deputy Superintendent's of Police

Hizb ceasefire

I got married in June 2000. In early July 2000 a bearded man knocked at my door. He introduced himself as Yazdani, the spokesman of Hizbul Mujahideen. After wishing me a happy married life, he sought a favour. "You are the Associate Editor of *Greater Kashmir*. Please publish a small news item in your esteemed newspaper stating that Hizb is going to make an important announcement in the coming days". He requested. After having tea, he left. Same evening, I filed the news item and urged my colleagues to ensure its publication. However, the person who was on duty that night ignored it. He ignored it the next day. Angered, I stayed back in the office for the night to inform the people that an important announcement is going to be made shortly.

Two days later, on July 24, a young man came to the *Greater Kashmir* office. "Please get other journalists. We have to address a press conference", he said. I called some people but only a few including Fayaz Bukhari who then worked for a private news channel, Faisal from Business Standard and Rashid Rahi from Current News Service (CNS) responded. We were taken in a Maruti-800 to a mansion in Nishat. The Commander-in-Chief, Operations, Abdul Majid Dar entered the room wearing a snow white Khan suit. He was flanked by his associates. All of us watched him keenly and listened carefully while he announced the ceasefire. He also expressed willingness to enter into a dialogue with the Government of India. However, he could not give satisfactory answers to some of our questions.

The announcement caused a stir in the sub-continent. The Government of India in a guarded statement welcomed the ceasefire. The militant groups especially those based in Pakistan declared Dar a traitor. The endorsement of this offer by the group's supremo Syed Salahuddin followed in an Islamabad press conference on July 25.

On August 3, 2000, a high-level official team of the Government of India visited Srinagar and conducted a meeting with Dar and his associates at the Nehru Guest House. The talks were facilitated by Fazal Haque Qureshi. Meanwhile, the group accused the army of violating the ceasefire.

In a statement, a spokesman of the Hizbul Mujahideen confirmed that no meeting of its commanders and Government representatives had taken place in Srinagar on August 5. "Our commanders had to return to the field for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation," said the statement. "That is why they could not return on August 5 for the meeting." It accused the army of killing one of its members, Shabir Ahmad alias Jaanbaz, at Arnas in Udhampur district of Jammu division. "At other places in the valley, the army is forcing our cadres to surrender and harassing the relatives of militants belonging to our outfit," the statement said. "So the commanders had to return to the field." The Hizb, however, said the talks would continue the following week. But, no date was set.

The organization appealed once again to the other outfits to support the ceasefire for a resolution of the Kashmir problem and "deny the government an escape route from talks." Meanwhile, in an exclusive interview with *rediff.com*, the chief of the People's Political Front and Hizb intermediary Fazal Haq Qureshi said his role in the talks was over.

"My role as an intermediary ended on the day the very first round of talks was held at the Nehru Guest House," he said.

"It is now for the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Government to finalize the modalities of the ceasefire." "Don't think the Hizbul Mujaheedin has surrendered," Qureshi said, "but wisdom has dawned on the outfit for a peaceful solution to the problem." Qureshi said the Hizb was not pressing for Pakistan's inclusion in the talks at this stage. "Pakistan can be included later," he said. But, he added that Pakistan is a party to the dispute and the problem can only be solved through tripartite talks. Qureshi hoped, however, that Hizb chief Syed Salah-ud-Din would extend his August 8 deadline to press for tripartite talks. "I appeal to the HM chief to extend the deadline" he said. "The dialogue must continue as I feel the Government of India is serious this time."

However, on August 8, 2000, Syed Salahuddin 'withdrew' the cease-fire at a press conference in Islamabad, reportedly under pressure from the other militant groups and their handlers in Pakistan.

On March 23, 2003, Majid Dar was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the Noor Bagh area of Sopore Township in North Kashmir when two gun-wielding youth barged into his ancestral house and fired indiscriminately. A person claiming to be a spokesperson for the HM called up the news agency and condemned Dar's killing. The killing was owned by two militant outfits, Save Kashmir Movement and Al Nasireen.

Assault on Judiciary

In July 2000, the State Home Department issued a written order directing the jail superintendents not to honour court orders seeking release of political prisoners.

I was then with the daily *Greater Kashmir* as Associate Editor. I filed the story and called the then Chief Secretary, Ashok Jaitley for his comments. He made me read the order. "You have called at an odd hour. Please do not bother me", he said.

The impugned order was withdrawn after fifteen days when the Bar Association registered strong protest.

The role of judiciary in protecting human rights came up for discussion at a seminar organized by the High Court Bar Association, Srinagar on the World Human Rights Day some years ago.

Most of the speakers discussed the technicalities. However, a senior lawyer, G.N. Gauhar said the process of eroding the supremacy of judiciary started the day when Sher-e-Kashmir took over as the emergency administrator of the state in 1947.

The audience listened keenly as the lawyer compared the judiciary of pre-1947 and post-1947. "Maharaja Hari Singh was an autocrat. All powers vested in him. But no enforced disappearance, no custodial killing, no fake encounter has been reported during his regime", he said.

Hari Singh, he said, allowed the judiciary to flourish. "When his queen Maharani Tara Devi wrote a note to a magistrate urging him to take a lenient view in a case, the all powerful Maharaja tendered an unconditional and written apology to

the magistrate", he said.

On the contrary, the lawyer said, a halqa president of National Conference from Budgam district wrote a note to a High Court judge urging him not to hear a second appeal in a revenue case, and Sher-e-Kashmir directed the learned judge to quit or do as directed. "The learned judge resigned in protest", he said.

The process continues to this day, Gauhar said. "Today a stage has come when the judges have started expressing their helplessness in open courts."

Some years ago, the then Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM), Budgam expressed his inability to ensure presence of the accused in the Jalil Andrabi murder case. "The relatives of the deceased are justified in casting aspersions on the judiciary for its failure to administer justice", the learned magistrate remarked.

In a petition filed by the Bar Association in Jalil's case, Late Justice Rizvi made a similar remark. "This never happened during autocratic rule", he said.

Mirwaiz at his best

Mirwaiz Umer Farooq was at his best on March 28, 2003. He strongly condemned the massacre of 24 pandits at Nadimarg, Pulwama. Admitting his failure to save the pandits, Umer urged the Imams across Kashmir to come out strongly against the massacre. "Our pandit brothers who stayed back in the Valley despite odds deserve a fair deal. How can we face them? This is a beastly act. We are responsible for what is happening in Kashmir", a visibly shocked Mirwaiz said while addressing a mammoth congregation at the historic Jamia Masjid.

However, Mirwaiz also expressed his helplessness. "How can I protect the pandits? I am unsafe as well. Today Hindus and Muslims are equally pained. We do not know who the culprits are", he said.

The Muslims were equally shocked and enraged. Carrying placards, they demanded justice for the families of the victims. "Stop killing innocents. Bring the culprits to justice", they demanded.

The reaction of the Mirwaiz and the common people evoked a comment from my pandit friend. "Had you taken a similar stand in 1990, the situation would have been different today."

Despite widespread condemnation that the massacre evoked, the scared pandit community was not satisfied. Many of them left the Valley for good.

On March 23, gunmen in army combat uniform shot dead 24 pandits at Nadimarg, Pulwama. The deceased included 11 men, 11 women and two children. Only a few days later, the police claimed a breakthrough in the case. According to the police, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was responsible for the massacre. "And

the outfit was planning to attack activists of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and some temples to 'avenge' the killing of Muslims in Gujarat", the police said.

The police claimed arrest of LeT's Anantnag district commander, Zia Mustafa alias Arbaz alias Umar Abdullah. He was produced before media persons. The Director General of Police, Ashok K. Suri, said the militant was a resident of Rawlakot in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and was arrested on specific information. He refused to give further details saying, "They will hamper further operations, though we have already conducted some to track down others". Asked whether Zia was part of the group which killed the Pandits, Suri said "He attended the meeting in which it was decided, he connived and planned". "The meeting, attended by half-a-dozen LeT commanders, decided that retaliatory action be taken against the Gujarat incidents", he said.

Counter-insurgency orphaned

The father of counter-insurgency, Muhammad Yusuf Parray alias Kuka Parray was gunned down by militants at Hajjin, Baramulla district on September 13, 2003. With his death ended an era.

The militants, reports said, had laid an ambush knowing that the most dreaded counter-insurgent had to take the particular route to inaugurate a cricket match at Hajjin. Reports said the militants first hurled a grenade at his vehicle and then opened indiscriminate fire with their automatic rifles. Kuka Parray and seven other injured persons were quickly moved to an army hospital on the town's outskirts where he and two of his associates, Mohammad Akram and Ali Mohammad Dar, succumbed to injuries. Reports said a top State civil servant, Divisional Commissioner Parvez Dewan, had also been invited to the function but he returned unharmed in the afternoon.

Kuka Parray, who was in his late 40s, was himself a militant commander whose writ ran unchallenged in the Sumbal, Bandipore belt of Baramulla district during the heyday of militancy in Jammu Kashmir. Sometime in 1995 though, he came into contact with a local army unit and soon switched sides. He quit the Ikhwan-e-Muslimeen outfit to create his own-one with an identical name Ikhwan-e-Muslimoon. Thereafter, he and his associates started working with the army and proved extremely 'helpful' in counter-insurgency operations.

Kuka Parray indulged in violence, loot and arson against his opponents and vandalized the area's ecology, felling

thousands of trees and encouraged renegades involved in such acts. He always insisted that his mission was to eradicate terrorism and the gun culture from Kashmir.

Kuka Parray was elected to the State Assembly from his home constituency, Sonawari, in September 1996, but his critics, including the National Conference, whose candidate lost to him, alleged that it was the security forces who made his victory possible through manipulation.

As a legislator, though, Parray was a failure, which even his admirers acknowledged. He lost to the National Conference candidate in the 2002 Assembly elections and was keeping a low profile since. His killing came two weeks after one of his closest former associates Javed Hussain Shah was shot dead by militants.

The Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, described the killing as a setback to the peace process.

A valiant soldier dies

Death follows a strict calendar. It is never untimely. Death comes when it is destined to come. In fact, death acts as a shield and protects a person as long as he is supposed to live. But when the time comes, death kills him. Death, however, is not the end of life. A person is not completely born until he is dead. Some people get noticed after their death. Aasiya is one of them.

Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) decided to monitor the Parliamentary elections of 2004. The JKCCS members met on April 19, 2004. I was supposed to lead a team to Kupwara. The coordinator had arranged a vehicle to take me and my team to the frontier district. But at the last moment the coordinator requested me to get a vehicle from my office. I then worked for *Greater Kashmir*. "Please get a vehicle from your office. It will save us some money", the coordinator requested. I readily agreed. He also requested me to take my team to Bandipora instead of Kupwara. I shrugged my shoulders. Next day I came to know why destiny made the coordinator change my route. It was Aasiya who had to fall to a deafening IED explosion. As a token of respect to the great martyr, I have not thanked Allah the Almighty for the change effected by the coordinator.

I was lucky to have the renowned human rights activist Gautam Navlakha in my team. On the way to Bandipora, we went inside scores of polling booths and had tea and snacks in Bandipora town in the house of an acquaintance. Smoking at the banks of Wullar Lake, Gautam expressed serious concern over

the miserable plight of Asia's largest fresh water lake. "Do not worry. We will get it cleaned after Azadi", I said jokingly. He too had a hearty laugh. Around this time, I received a call on my cell phone. "We met with an accident. A powerful explosion ripped apart our vehicle. The driver died on the spot. Aasiya and Khurram (coordinator) are critically injured. We are rushing the injured to Srinagar via Sopore", a volunteer who miraculously survived the blast said.

I called off the monitoring and rushed towards Sopore. I saw two pearls coming out of Gautam's eyes. The pearls rolled down his cheeks and fell down. Alas, I could not preserve them as a memento of his love for Kashmir and Kashmiris. The ambulance carrying Aasiya and Khurram came rushing and did not enter the sub-district hospital. "This means they are critical", Gautam told me. We followed the ambulance. A volunteer kept us informed of the developments through his cell phone. "Aasiya is reciting Quran. Now she has stopped reciting. She is seeking pardon for her sins. Khurram is calm but in pain."

Professor (Dr.) Bashir, who teaches German in the University of Kashmir, had got in our vehicle at Sopore. As soon as the ambulance reached near the sprawling sericulture fields at Mirgund, I received the shocking news. "Aasiya is no more", the volunteer informed me. Professor Bashir could not control himself. He burst into tears.

Aasiya was down with fever on April 19, and had no plans to go anywhere on April 20. But she came out of her house around 6:00 am and reached Lal Chowk well in time to find a place in the coordinator's team. The ill fated vehicle left for Kupwara. Alas! It was not a bon voyage for anyone of them. Khurram Parvez, who lost his leg in the blast, narrated the story. "The blast had thrown me a few meters away from the damaged vehicle. I saw Aasiya. She was in a pool of her own blood. She raised her arm in a bid to cover her body. Realizing

that the arm she had raised had lost its hand in the blast, Aasiya raised another arm and set her clothes right."

In October 2003, I had a chance of travelling with Aasiya to Amsterdam where we were supposed to attend a conference on Kashmir

Aasiya was at her best in the conference. Before the concluding session, she was supposed to address female delegates from other countries. I was a bit worried and went to the hall. I stood there for a few minutes watching her and other delegates. She could read my mind. She smiled and waved at me. I waved back. She had done it. While addressing the concluding session, the organizers made a mention of Aasiya. "A nation that has women like Aasiya cannot be enslaved for long." Aasiya had her head in the right place. She could hear the "unheard voices". She also gave tongue to the woes of the sufferers through her writings. The magazine (*Voices Unheard*) she edited was widely circulated across the globe.

Aasiya, according to an office bearer of JKCCS, is always there to help a "half-orphan" in his studies. She is still there to listen to the woes of the half widows. She is always there to inspire her colleagues. But not withstanding all this, Aasiya is no more. What an irony? For becoming immortal one has to taste death. People are born and people die. But when a person like Aasiya dies, a vacuum is created.

Aga Shaid Ali's father, Aga Ashraf Ali once said: "Great people die young. Precious people remain un-noticed at the bottom of the sea. People know them after their death." This is exactly what happened to Aasiya. Her own family was not aware of the noble job she had been doing in the JKCCS office. After her martyrdom when people from all over the globe called on them to console them, they were surprised. Now, Aasiya's mission is as dear to them as it is to her colleagues and friends.

Deceased appears in court

The reckless and indiscriminate use of the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) has time and again caused embarrassment to the authorities. At one point, the Law Minister admitted the failure of his Government when he stated that use of PSA was not justified. He said PSA was needed to keep things under control.

Records reveal how authorities make a fool of themselves by invoking the legislation without ascertaining the facts. This story reflects a "deceased's" concern for his "assassin". In November 2007 a "deceased" appeared in a court to rescue his "assassin"! He could not identify the accused (assassin), who according to the police had killed him, on February 10, 2007. The court while considering the statement of the "deceased" enlarged the "assassin" on bail.

The bail order was served upon Central Jail authorities for compliance on November 19, 2007. The jail authorities honored the court orders but the CIK (Counter Intelligence Kashmir) sleuths picked him up and detained him in Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) for a crime he never committed. He was shifted to Udhampur jail.

On the same day, November 19, the District Magistrate, Ganderbal passed an order (No. DMS/PSA/07/11) detaining the accused under PSA. A representation of the accused's brother, Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie, made the District Magistrate realize his mistake on November 23. The representation seeking revocation of the impugned detention order caused a stir in the District Magistrate's office.

On November 28, the District Magistrate wrote letter No.DC/GB1/PS/Misc-7/919-921 to the concerned Superintendent of Police (SP). The letter reads: "Please refer grounds of detention communicated by you to this office in respect of Shri Muzafar Ahmad Ganie s/o Ghulam Nabi Ganie r/o Barwalla, Tehsil Kangan, District Ganderbal vide your no. Pross/Dossier/07/22300-302 dated October 26, 2007. Among other things you have mentioned that one Shabir Ahmad Bhat s/o Ghulam Muhammad Bhat r/o Kachnambal, Kangan who was working as follower in Jammu Kashmir Police got killed in pursuance of the plan worked out by Shri Muzaffar Ahmad Ganie s/o Ghulam Nabi Ganie r/o Barwalla, Tehsil Kangan, District Ganderbal. Today on November 28, it was reliably learnt that Shri Shabir Ahmad Bhat has not been killed and instead he is working under your administrative control. Please have the same verified so that the detention order passed by the undersigned vide Order No: DMG/PSA/07/11 dated November 19, 2007 under Jammu Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 is amended under intimation to higher authorities accordingly."

Accused Muzaffar, 22, was a laborer by profession. He has now preferred a petition in the High Court challenging the detention order. He has also sought compensation to the tune of Rs. 20 lakhs.

The PSA was enacted by Sher-e-Kashmir in 1978 to crush dissent. The High Court has repeatedly taken serious note of non-application of mind while invoking the draconian law by the District Magistrates.

President brandishes AK-47

No dove was released and no olive branch was displayed by the President of India on her arrival in the "Valley of ghosts", on May 26, 2008. In total contravention of the established precedents, she brandished an assault rifle to "greet" Kashmiris.

The President's provocative gesture had to be seen in light of the recent developments. The Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad advocated a "bullet for bullet" policy to ensure "peace" in the State. Reports of army men imparting arms training to students belonging to a particular community in Jammu were carried by all the major newspapers of the Kashmir valley in the week prior to the arrival of the President, along with photographs.

The President has a team of advisors to give tips from time to time. The advisors even concentrate on the President's dress, body language and gait. The question of brandishing a gun for fun or in "lighter vein" does not, therefore, arise. The commoner stood justified in believing that it was a deliberate act aimed at conveying a strong message to the people of Kashmir. The photograph was released by the Defense Ministry officials, and this strengthened the argument.

Even if it were to be accepted that the President was "tempted" to pick up the gun, why did the Defense Ministry officials release the photograph? Could it have been a mere coincidence?

Although Kashmir has been reddened with blood during the past two decades of conflict, doves still sing the song of love and

peace in the "wounded paradise". The President could have easily managed a dove and released it as a good will gesture.

A few years ago, the Pakistan President, General Parvez Musharraf, during his visit to Pakistan administered Kashmir, fiddled with a pistol. The footage was shown time and again by Delhi based media. He was accused of conveying wrong signals at a time when the "peace process" had just commenced. But not a single word was uttered on the highly provocative gesture of Pratibha Patil.

**Amarnath Land Row:
Sheikh Aziz's martyrdom**

I had gone fishing in Nigeen Lake on a sunny day in May 2008. Noted lawyer, Mian Abdul Qayoom called me. "You have to attend an important meeting at 4 pm at Ahdoos Hotel. Please ensure your presence", he said.

I packed up and rushed to the hotel. Qayoom was already there. Representatives of trade and social organizations were there as well. Prominent among them was Late Moulana Showkat, the President of Jamiat-e-Ahli Hadees and Dr. Mubeen Shah, Mohammad Yasin Khan and Dukhtaran-e-Millat Chief, Aasiya Andrabi. We were also joined by Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman, Malik Mohammad Yasin. We framed a strategy to fight allotment of forest land to Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB).

Earlier a committee had been formed and I was assigned the job of "media management". It is essential to mention here that the people were already on the streets protesting allotment of the said land. For several days we watched the peoples' protests helplessly. However, slowly we took control of the agitation that claimed around 60 lives.

People started accepting our programmes and the agitation succeeded. The government had to cancel the allotment on July 1, 2008. Kashmiris celebrated the "victory" but it had an impact in Jammu. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Ashok Khajuria started a counter agitation on June 22, 2008.

By this time, the committee of which I was a member was wound up and a new committee comprising mainly of political

parties was formed to take the agitation to its logical end. A few people died in the Jammu agitation. The angry people enforced an "economic blockade" of Kashmir. The economic blockade was extended to Muslim areas like Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts in Jammu region.

Two Kashmiri drivers were burnt alive along with their vehicles at Jammu. However, the Kashmiri Muslims did not lose their cool despite this provocation. They provided food and shelter to Amarnath pilgrims.

In response to the blockade, the Kashmiris demanded opening up of Jhelum Valley Road. The leadership gave a call for Muzaffarabad Chalo on August 11, 2008. Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Shabir Ahmad Shah led a procession from Sopore. The soldiers opened fire at the procession at Chala, 25 kilometers from border town of Uri. Aziz got killed in the firing.

He was laid to rest at martyrs' graveyard at Eidgah Srinagar. Around five lakh people assembled at his native town, Pampore for his Chaharum. However, a badly organized function left the people disappointed. There was confusion on the dais, the mike was not working and everybody seemed keen to address the gathering.

The police arrested Muhammad Ashraf Akhoo of Khanpora Varmul, Faisal Ahmad Bhat of Batpora, Sopore and Barkatullah Dar of Dangerpora, Sopore and registered an FIR 56/2008 against them. Accused of murdering Sheikh Aziz, the youth were put on trial.

The trio, however, were acquitted of the murder charges in 2010. Barkatullah was released but Ashraf and Faisal are facing additional trial under Section 7/25 of the Indian Arms Act.

The 61-day agitation ended on August 31, 2008 in Jammu when an agreement was reached with the Government. The SASB was authorized to make temporary use of 40-hectares of land during the relevant yatra period. The SASB convener Leela Karan Sharma said: "We have suspended the agitation for the time being though not called it off, as some of our demands are yet to be met."

Bijli, Pani and Sadak

The pro-resistance camp, by and large, was shocked by massive participation of people in the 2008 elections. Nobody including the government had expected such participation. In the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) office, a group of dismayed volunteers was discussing the situation. A man known to JKCCS president, Parvez Imroz walked in. He was well dressed but worried for his life. He had been contacted by the intelligence sleuths a fortnight before the elections. He was promised Rs. 5 lacs and security if he contested the elections as an independent candidate. He agreed and also wooed some of his friends to avail the "opportunity" of becoming Members of the Legislative Assembly. They were provided security and accommodation in a hotel.

He said the Government expected total boycott keeping in view the Amarnath agitation and economic blockade of Kashmir by Jammu traders. "The martyrdom of Peoples League (PL) leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz had only added to their anger. The Government, this time was not looking for voters. It was a different story now. It was looking for candidates", he said.

However, contrary to expectations, the people came out in large numbers to vote. This group lost its relevance. The group now wanted to expose the lies of the government and wanted Parvez Imroz to organize a press conference for them. Parvez refused. He sat there for a few moments and left. This had a soothing effect on the JKCCS volunteers.

The JKCCS has been monitoring elections since 2002. We also monitored the 2008 elections. I personally interviewed hundreds of voters. They had come out to vote for drains, roads, water and electricity. "By casting votes we have not conceded our right to self determination", they made clear. The elected legislators, therefore, have mandate for administrative jobs only. People, by and large, do not want them to indulge in the resolution process. And this is what the government of India has admitted in the United Nations and this is what the United Nations believes in. The people have also made it amply clear by ignoring all the roadmaps put forth by various political parties. They are indifferent to autonomy, self rule, and achievable nationhood. Even General Musharraf's Four Point Formula has been rejected. Slight deviation from the popular stand won former Hurriyat chairman, Professor Abdul Ghanî Bhat lot of criticism.

Shopian Rapes

A week after the tragic Shopian rapes, I accompanied a team of the International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian administered Kashmir (IPTK) to Shopian. The team comprising US based Anthropologist, Dr. Angana P. Chatterji, noted human rights defenders, Parvez Imroz and Khurram Parvez, visited the spot where the two women, according to authorities had drowned.

Two women: Aasiya, 17 and Neelofar were raped and subsequently murdered at Shopian during the night intervening May 29/30, 2009. The locals and the aggrieved relatives blamed the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel for the act. However, the authorities said the women had drowned. The incident brought life to a standstill across Kashmir for more than a month.

"What are they saying? Even a rabbit cannot drown in these waters", Angana said. She made a site plan and we left. We called on Shakeel, the husband of Neelofar. He narrated his woeful tale yet again. He blamed the police for the heinous act. Later, we went to the graveyard and offered fatehah to the martyred women. Angana placed some wild flowers on the graves.

Later, we called the Majlis-e-Mushwarat, a body they led the agitation for justice, to our office (Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society) at Amira Kadal, Srinagar and we got involved in the agitation.

Meanwhile, the Government appointed a Commission headed by Justice (Retd.) Muzaffar Jan. The Commission submitted its interim report on June 22, 2009. The report ruled out

drowning as the reason for the death. The report also criticized the concerned Station House Officer, Superintendent of Police and District Magistrate, Shopian for mishandling the case.

The report also takes serious note of the "incompetence" of the medical team that performed the autopsy on the bodies of Aasiya and Neelofar. People were also given to believe that the Government may extend the terms of reference of the Commission to ascertain who misled the Chief Minister by telling him the women had died due to drowning.

The Government also entrusted the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The CBI on September 2, 2009 exhumed the bodies of the two women. The bodies were examined in presence of three Executive Magistrates and family members of Neelofar and Aasiya. The bodies were examined by a team of doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), headed by Dr. T.D. Dogra in the presence of eye witnesses. The AIIMS team found Aasiya's hymen intact and ruled out rape of the two women. The team also failed to find injury marks on the bodies.

The CBI, surprisingly, indicted Neelofar's husband and Aasiya's brother, Shakeel Ahmad and other witnesses and bailed out the real culprits. Shakeel and Majlis-e-Mushawarat rejected the CBI findings. A copy of the CBI findings was torched outside the High Court complex at Srinagar.

The final report of the Commission was doctored much to the disappointment of Justice (Retd.) Muzaffar Jan. Dismayed by the development, Jan chose to live with a relative in Australia for quite some time.

Taking cognizance of a petition, the Chief Justice held: "Either the arrested policemen are involved or know the guilty." On August 19, the Chief Justice remarked: "Based on the evidences which were available, the court felt that the puzzle could be cracked; there is a conspiracy to shield someone."

Again on August 26, the Chief Justice while commenting on Shakeel's (Neelofar's husband) involvement observed: "As soon as the fudging of vaginal swab came to light it immediately came to our mind that it cannot be done by the husband of Neelofer. It is not that easy."

However, notwithstanding the observations, the CBI gave a clean chit to the police, para-military forces and the army. As usual, the CBI sees a conspiracy by the witnesses and the survivors to malign the image of the police and the security forces.

The quest for justice continued. The following year, while commemorating the martyrdom of Aasiya and Neelofar, the Majlis-e-Mushwarat, released a book on the victims. The book titled *Shopian; Institutional denial of justice* was released by the father of Neelofar.

Later Neelofar's husband and Aasiya's brother, Shakeel Ahmad unveiled a memorial bearing names of a number of women who were raped during the past two decades across Kashmir.

Majlis-e-Mushawarat sought investigation by the IPTK of the rapes and murder on January 10, 2010. The Majlis threatened agitation incase the government failed to provide access to IPTK to evidentiary material by or before February 1.

The Majlis organized a day-long consultative programme "Shopian: Birth of a response" with civil society in Shopian on January 10. It was unanimously decided that the Majlis would continue to strive for justice.

"We ask the government to provide access to the Tribunal to all the materials, sites and persons as demanded by or before 1st of February 2010 failing which the Majlis along with the larger civil society of Kashmir will agitate in all the relevant global fora to persuade the government for providing such access. It has become imperative to highlight the conditions of besiegement as a result of extreme militarization of Kashmir,

which has fostered conditions for this kind of a crime, aimed at breaking the will and battering the dignity of people", the meet made clear.

The Majlis and the civil society actors urged the people to maintain safe distance from the men in uniform for self preservation. The meeting attended by a people from all walks of life lashed out at the State and its institutions for subverting the process of justice. "They have done everything to break the determination of people."

The fight for justice continues to this day.

Police Khatam Sharief

Never had such esteemed guests arrived in the Police Control Room. Everybody was on his toes. The room meant for the guests was properly cleaned. Perfumed smoke emanating from the incense sticks and the spray of rose water at regular intervals had a soothing effect on the guests and the hosts as well. It was an ideal environment for a prayer meeting meant for peace and tranquility in the conflict ridden state. But the feast went in vain. The assembly did not yield the desired results. Much to the discomfort of the embarrassed police officials, the Control Room fiasco evoked humorous reaction outside.

On January 30, 2010, a grand feast was hosted in the Police Control Room for thirty-three Mullas from different shrines of the city. As per established precedents, the guests started the prayer meeting by reciting Quranic verses followed by Naa't and Darood-o-Azkaar. For several hours they prayed for a peaceful 2010. Some police men also participated in the prayer meeting. Delicious wazwaan (traditional Kashmiri cuisine) was served at the end and the Mullas, reports said, were given some Nazrana (money) for praying peace. The esteemed guests had a hearty meal. They also took delicious wazwaan for their families.

The prayer meeting was well conducted but something went wrong somewhere. Allah the almighty chose not to grant the prayer. Peace became a casualty next day and to add insult to injury stone pelting youth did not spare the Control Room building where the Mullahs had held a Khatam Shareef

(Devotional prayers) the previous day.

A day after the police hosted the feast, a youth Wamiq Farooq was killed by a police official in down town Srinagar. The killing triggered violent demonstrations across Kashmir. At least 150 persons including 50 police and CRPF men sustained injuries in violent clashes that crippled life for five days in Srinagar and other major towns of the Kashmir valley.

As things started settling down by February 5, another youth, Zahid Farooq got killed in mysterious circumstances at Brain Nishat. The locals blame the Border Security Forces (BSF) personnel for the killing. The authorities had to impose undeclared curfew to ensure peace.

Counting the dead

On April 26, 2010, I filed a story for a local news paper titled "Who shall prevent the killing? Amnesty International can only count the dead!" It read: "What can the AI do if New Delhi allows it to visit Kashmir formally? India is too strong a country to succumb to AI pressure. The way New Delhi has been treating the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) resolutions on Kashmir leaves no scope for an NGO (Non Governmental Organization) like the Amnesty International to fulfill the expectations of the people."

I wrote: "The OIC, AI, ICRC and other organizations can only count the dead. They cannot prevent the killing." To my surprise, a month later on May 17, the Government of India allowed AI to visit Kashmir. And as expected, the pro-resistance lobby and human rights defenders, by and large were not prepared for the event. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq told the visiting team that he would appeal to the people to furnish details to the AI. The international human rights watchdog, however, remained confined to the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA).

It took AI almost a year to come out with its report on PSA. The report titled "A Lawless Law" won widespread appreciation but was ignored notwithstanding the assurances to the contrary.

They met the Chief Minister who promised to implement the report in letter and spirit. The team succeeded in securing release of a minor, Faizan

A member also took the detained Geelani for a ride across the city.

In 2012, when the team came for a follow up it observed: "The Jammu and Kashmir authorities continue to use the PSA to circumvent the rule of law and the criminal justice system. They resort to PSA detentions instead of charging and trying persons suspected of offences in court" said Ananth Guruswamy, Director, Amnesty International India. "Jammu and Kashmir authorities often keep persons in detention even after the detentions have been quashed by the High Court". The AI team to its dismay found no tangible changes on the ground. This time the government ignored their campaign for securing the release of another minor Danish Farooq. Pertinently various organizations had made as many as 20,000 appeals since 1990-2010 to have an AI team in Kashmir. And when it came, it only counted the dead!

Go India Go Back

The first phase of the 2010 agitation started on January 31 when Wamiq Farooq got killed. It was followed by the killing of Zahid Farooq at Nishat. People were on the streets once again. Masarat Alam was behind bars then and Syed Ali Shah Geelani was in New Delhi. Masarat was released when the agitation had claimed many a life. The agitation, rather uprising, was totally indigenous.

The uprising started with the killing of a student of 11th standard on January 31 when a police officer allegedly fired a tear smoke shell near Rajouri Kadal in down town Srinagar at him. The killing evoked massive demonstrations across Kashmir. Hundreds of persons including scores of policemen sustained injuries in clashes that lasted a week. The Government ordered an enquiry but to the dismay of the people, the enquiry dubbed Wamiq as a stone pelter. The slain youth's parents preferred a complaint in the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM). Shabir Ahmad Khan and Ghulam Ahmad Bhat of Bohri Kadal appeared in the court and got their statements recorded. The duo told the court that Wamiq was killed in cold blood by a police officer. "When the fatal tear smoke shell was fired, no stone pelting was going on in the area", they said.

A few days later, another student, Zahid Farooq was killed by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel near Nishat on February 5.

Meanwhile, the leaders including Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Masarat Alam were released. Their release added impetus to

the uprising. On June 11, another youth, Tufail Matoo was killed by a tear smoke shell when he was returning home from tuition classes. A Special Investigating Team (SIT) was constituted. The SIT appraised the court that on the fateful day no tear smoke gun was allotted.

The killing added fuel to the fire. Demonstrations across Kashmir brought life to a standstill. The authorities clamped indefinite curfew but demonstrations continued and so did the killings.

The movement was given a shape. A slogan "Go India Go Back" was introduced. Soon this slogan was painted on walls, roads and even vehicles. A veteran National Conference worker admitted that the movement was reminiscent of Sher-e-Kashmir's Quit Kashmir movement of 1946.

This was followed by killing of three youth at Anchidoora, Anantnag on June 29. According to eyewitnesses Shujat-ul-Islam, 17, Imitiyaz Ahmad Yetoo, 15, and Ishtiyaq Ahmad Khanday were killed in cold blood by police in the compound of a house. The town witnessed massive demonstrations for several days. The killers are free as the families await justice.

On July 7 the police stormed Sidiqabad, Batmaloo. A girl, Fancy, was shot when she tried to close the window of her room. An eyewitness saw a police man aiming at a window. This was the fatal bullet that robbed Fancy of her life. A fellow police man, according to the eyewitness, slapped the killer for shooting a girl.

The demonstrators dispersed and the police also left. Meanwhile, a man announced Fancy's death from the same mosque that was used for playing revolutionary songs. The revolution had consumed yet another child. As usual thousands of people including a large number of women came out to mourn the death.

Fancy's final journey was eventful as well. While her body

was taken to a park where thousands of people had gathered to offer funeral prayers to her, the guards posted at the local Member of Legislative Assembly's house opened fire to disperse a mob that wanted to set the legislator's house on fire. Finally, Fancy was laid to rest late in the evening when the police left the area.

The same day, the President of the High Court Bar association, Mian Abdul Qayoom was arrested. He was detained under the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA). He had attended a meeting seeking support for the Quit Jammu Kashmir Movement.

A few days later, the Secretary of the Bar Association was also arrested. The authorities slapped PSA on him as well. The Bar boycotted courts in protest.

On August 3, the CRPF personnel thrashed 9 year old Sameer Ahmad Rah to death at Batmaloo. He (Sameer) had requested Rs. 5 for purchasing toffees but received only Rs. 2. After few minutes, Sameer returned to his house asking for Rs.10 to purchase pears from a street vendor for the family.

Sameer's father, Fayaz Ahmad said: "He gave us the pears and said he will leave for his cousin's house at nearby Aloochoi Bagh to play carom. I told him to go through lanes as curfew was in place. His mother gave him a pear and he left happily promising to return before evening," he said.

After few minutes, Fayaz said people took to streets saying the troopers had killed a child. He telephoned his brother to inquire if Sameer had reached his house. But before Fayaz could say anything, his brother told him to take care of the children as a boy had been killed.

"I realized that Sameer had not reached there. But I could not dare to tell my brother that Sameer was out of the house fearing he will be worried," he said. Without realizing even in his wildest imagination that the victim was his child, Fayaz

says he rushed out. Some people told him that the police had taken the body to Police Control Room.

Fayaz said he heard some youth from adjoining localities saying that the boy's head was smashed with a stick by the troopers in a lane without any provocation. "They said after he fell down on the road, around seven troopers trampled his chest and continuously hit him with bamboo sticks till he fell unconscious. They further said the troopers tried to dump the body in nearby bushes. But after they were spotted by some youth, his body was bundled into a Gypsy and taken to the Police Control Room," Fayaz said

Fayaz said the police added insult to their injury by stating in the FIR No.93/2010 that Sameer was killed in a stampede.

An eyewitness, wishing anonymity, said that Sameer ran towards the road after being chased by dogs. "The troopers hit his head hard and inserted a stick deep in his throat. They took turns to stand on his chest and kicked him as if he was a football. From his frail body, one could clearly see his ribs broken. He breathed his last on the spot," he said.

Fayaz strongly refutes the police theory. "On the second day of my son's killing, a senior police officer came to my house saying he had rebuked the troopers on seeing the body. Why have you killed the boy," said Fayaz quoting the police officer. "He (the police officer) had even assured me to register a case against the accused troopers and give me justice. But the police was trying to hush up the case. I will not sit until my son's killers are brought to book. People of Batmaloo and adjoining areas have assured me support," he said.

The Station House Officer (SHO) of Batmaloo Police Station, Zahoor Ahmad, refuted the allegations of hushing up the case. "Investigations are on in the case. We will also be recording the statements of eyewitness in the case. Law will take its own course," the SHO said.

On August 15 when Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah was delivering his "Independence speech" to a large number of policemen and soldiers from army and para-military forces, a police man, Abdul Ahad Jan threw a shoe at him. The shoe missed the intended target. "Throw shoes not stones", Omar responded. Jan was immediately taken into custody and severely tortured. However, Omar pardoned him.

On September 11 (Eid-ul-Fitr) curfew was lifted. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq led a procession to Lal Chowk which had been declared out of bounds for the people. A fire destroyed the Power Development Corporation (PDC) office near Jahangir Chowk completely. Curfew was re-imposed and the entire Kashmir valley put under siege.

On September 30, Omar addressed the Legislative Assembly. Rejecting politicization of killings in Kashmir, he used highly "loaded" words. Describing those killed in the ongoing unrest as "martyrs", he said he would be happy to see these "sacrifices" fetching benefit to the State.

"I am sadder than anybody else. Over these 109 deaths, I feel my body has been torn into 109 pieces," he said. "There is no harm if those involved in these killings are hanged but I would be happier when these sacrifices would get Jammu and Kashmir some benefit. My pain is more than that of Mahbooba Mufti and others. I feel as if somebody put his gun on my chest and fired at me", he added.

The young Abdullah tried to escape responsibility by stating "There is no harm if those involved in these killings are hanged." He posed a question to evade an answer to the most important question. "Why people got killed, I will reply on that if discussion over the issue takes place. Allegations were leveled against me, I will reply to all during the discussion," he added.

Thanks to the police, the emotional speech went in vain. All the newspapers that carried the speech in detail were

thrown into Jehlum by the men in uniform for unknown reasons in wee hours of the morning.

Omar delivered a fiery speech in the Assembly on October 6. He challenged the totality of accession and described Jammu Kashmir a disputed territory. Although Syed Ali Shah Geelani said the speech was scripted in New Delhi, it caused a ruckus in the assembly with Bhartiya Janata Paraty (BJP) and Panthers Party legislators seeking his resignation. Former Home Minister, L.K. Advani also demanded his ouster for his "anti-national" remarks.

New Delhi appointed Interlocutors to find a solution to the problem and school examinations created a dent in the strike programme. By November, it was all over and people went back to work.

Geelani has 5 points, Mirwaiz 4

On August 31, 2010 Hurriyat (G) chairman, Syed Ali Geelani came out with his five conditions for a dialogue with New Delhi. The conditions included:

India should accept Kashmir as an international dispute,
Begin demilitarization in the State under the supervision of a credible world agency,

Repeal all harsh laws, including Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1990 (AFSPA) and Public Safety Act, 1978,

Release all political prisoners and punish the forces' personnel involved in the killings which took place across the Kashmir valley since June.

He also wanted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to publicly commit and ensure no further killings take place.

Meanwhile, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq who heads a faction of Hurriyat Conference laid down four conditions for holding a dialogue with Government of India. Mirwaiz's demands include:

Withdrawal of security forces from residential areas, villages and towns,

End to human rights abuses,

Release of all political prisoners and

Revocation of harsh laws like the AFSPA and Disturbed Areas Act.

On November 12, Omar Abdullah in an interview with a local news agency said Geelani's conditions had been

accepted. He pointed out that "the interlocutors have already termed Kashmir as a dispute and New Delhi has not opposed it. The other four demands of Geelani come under the prerogative of the State government and it is trying to implement them".

Taking a serious note of the Chief Minister's statement, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) lambasted the Centre for hobnobbing with the separatist leaders by keeping the country in the dark. State president of the BJP Shamsheer Singh Manhas said, "The Congress-led UPA government at the Centre must come out with an explanation whether it has accepted the demands of the separatists to pave the way for a dialogue with them."

Old wine, old bottles

The 2010 uprising shocked New Delhi. However, instead of taking tangible measures to address the situation and the problem, the Government of India staged yet another drama. On October 13, 2010, three interlocutors led by noted journalist, Dileep Padgaonkar, were appointed to "buy time". Radha Kumar an academician and M.M. Ansari a bureaucrat comprised the other members of the team.

The Government of India made its non-seriousness known from the very beginning. Without getting the terms of reference, the interlocutors visited Srinagar and exceeded "constitutional" limits. They expressed willingness to consider Azadi as an option. They also told students in Kashmir University to prepare a roadmap. The Home Minister was quick to respond. "They must understand that they are not playing a cricket match in Kashmir."

The team met traders, journalists, pro-Indian politicians, detained militants and women. The pro-resistance lobby refused to meet them. However, a few leaders from the camp met them though "unofficially".

Noted human rights defender and President, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) compared them (interlocutors) to Aamir Khan's "3 Idiots". As time passed, the interlocutors seemed desperate for credibility which, they believed, would come by taking the "separatists" on board. The desperation finally took them to Moulana Abbas Ansari's residence on April 21, 2011. The meeting caused ripples in the Mirwaiz led Hurriyat.

Abbas responded by saying that the interlocutors called on him. However, Dileep Padgaonker while talking to a news channel said the meeting was arranged by "mutual friends". "We are in touch with separatists", he said. He said the meeting with Ansari was fruitful.

The Hurriyat put Ansari on notice. The amalgam called a special meeting to discuss the issue. Meanwhile, Ansari termed his suspension as unfortunate and said that the Chairman doesn't have powers to take such a decision. "According to Hurriyat constitution only Majlis-e-Shora (Executive Council) can take such a decision. Interlocutors called me and despite my reluctance to meet them, they came to my home. As a Muslim I couldn't tell a guest to go back," Ansari told a local news agency. He said that interlocutors want a meaningful dialogue between New Delhi and the separatist leaders.

"I stand for the meaningful dialogue and I believe that it is the only way forward. I'll not hesitate to talk or meet those Indian delegates who will approach me with good intention," he said.

Ansari said that interlocutors told him that they were eager for the commencement of the renewed dialogue between the separatist leaders and New Delhi. "I told them that the dialogue process should be started as soon as possible."

The former Hurriyat (M) Chairman said that he will continue to run his own party and doesn't care for the suspension from the conglomerate. "I'll not beg before Hurriyat and I don't care whether they will take me back or not. I have my own party and I know how to handle it," he said.

A few weeks later, Hurriyat decided to take Ansari back into its fold.

On October 12, 2011 the team panel submitted its report to the Home Minister. He showed no interest in the report for

more than six months. This was the time when the interlocutors started looking for an interlocutor for them. The Chief Interlocutor approached former Chief Minister, Mufti Muhammad Sayed urging him to take up the matter with the Home Minister.

The report was finally made public on May 24, 2012. It was the same old wine and this time even the bottles were not changed. "There exists a broader consensus within Jammu and Kashmir that the State should continue to function as a single entity within the Indian Union", the report conveyed. The report had no takers in Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere. Even the Ministry of Home Affairs came out with a disclaimer. "The views expressed in the Report are the views of the interlocutors. The Government has not yet taken any decisions on the Report."

The report talks about the need to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). However, the report treats the whole concept of a TRC in a very casual manner. It says, for example, "even if justice cannot be provided for all victims of violence, if some of those guilty of human rights abuses, including militants, were to ask forgiveness from the families of their victims, it would provide closure for many." The report also suffers from a serious lack of focus. The report's recommendations address issues that trivialize the real problems of the State. For instance, by recommending inter-regional dance and theatre competitions, cultural talks about inter-regional culture, and establishing "an art gallery in Srinagar."

The report sought training for journalists. "The national newspapers should be encouraged to publish Jammu and Kashmir editions", it suggested. And then they gave away their mind by suggesting curbs on the media which, according to them, had flourished in the state.

Best Roadmap

During the 2010 agitation, a friend from New Delhi called on me. He seemed worried over the killings and offered his sympathies. While discussing the situation, he said Kashmiri leadership had failed to come out with a suitable roadmap. That was a time when everybody talked about roadmaps. Even New Delhi's nominated interlocutors sought a roadmap from Kashmir University students. I told him about various roadmaps that had been put forth by the pro-Indian lobby and their fate. I told him about Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) Self Rule, the autonomy document of the National Conference (NC), Sajjad Lone's Achievable Nationhood. I also briefed him about Kashmir Study Group's joint management formula and Parvez Musharraf's four point scheme. He was surprised and expressed shock over New Delhi's reluctance to adapt the roadmaps. Finally I told him that the on-going struggle was not a question paper of a high school examination and the leaders were no examinees. He was also told that the British did not seek any roadmap from Gandhi.

A few days later a group of friends discussed all the roadmaps. Interestingly none of the roadmaps mentioned above address the aspirations of the people. As far as autonomy is concerned, nobody wants it in the State. The people of Jammu hate it. They have been demanding *Ek Pradaan, Ek Nishaan and Ek Vidaan* (One flag, one Parliament and one President). Barring a few National Conference workers and some vested interests nobody seems interested in autonomy in Kashmir. Similarly, the people of Ladakh are averse to the very idea. They

want Azadi from what they call Kashmiri hegemony. They have the Hill Council and seem satisfied with it for the time being.

Similarly, the Self Rule talks about opening up of traditional routes. The group found that Self Rule was coined with reference to a tribal society. Other roadmaps make no mention of sovereignty. One of the members of the group while commenting on joint management of Jammu Kashmir by India and Pakistan described it as "simultaneous cohabitation with two wives in a single bed."

The only roadmap that addresses the aspirations of the people is NC's Naya Kashmir Document in its original form. In August 1944 people were asked to assemble at Sopore. A special function was held with Sardar Budh Singh in chair. Sher-e-Kashmir released and adapted the Naya Kashmir Document.

Contemporary Kashmiri's hate Sher-e-Kashmir for "gifting Kashmir to India". But, differences with him notwithstanding, the Naya Kashmir document is a well researched, well written and comprehensive document. It has answers to all the questions ranging from sovereignty to unemployment.

Unfortunately, the historic document was tampered in 1975 when Indira-Abdullah accord was signed. Balraj Puri was assigned the job of modifying the document to suit New Delhi's interests. Provisions of sovereignty, compulsory arms training and granting asylum to foreign nationals involved in freedom struggles were deleted. But the provisions of unemployment, women empowerment and over all development of the state were retained.

Sections 9, 10, 11 and 12 deal with rights of senior citizens, women and children.

Section 11 makes mention of right to education. All citizens shall have the right to education. This right shall be ensured by universal compulsory elementary education, free of charge. In

addition a wide system of State scholarships shall be provided for poor students in the higher schools and universities. The mother-tongue shall be the medium of instruction. Free vocational technical and agronomic education shall be organized for adult workers in the fields and factories.

Section 12: women citizens shall be accorded equal rights with men in all fields of national life: economic, cultural, political, and in the State services. These rights shall be realized by affording women the right to work in every employment upon equal terms and for equal wages with men. Women shall be ensured rest, social insurance and education equally with men. The law shall give special protection to the interests of mother and child. The provision of pregnancy leave with pay and the establishment of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens shall further secure these rights.

There is no denying the fact that the document has "Leftist" tendencies. But it can be modified to cater to the needs of present day Kashmir. While other roadmaps nullify the importance of the United Nations Resolutions, this document does not undermine the historic resolutions. The resolutions talk of self-determination and this document stands for sovereignty. The two can, therefore, go together.

Geelani's challenge to Abdullah's

On September 4, 2010 Hurriyat chairman, Syed Ali Geelani challenged Dr. Farooq Abdullah to address a rally in Lal Chowk. The challenge generated interesting debate across Kashmir. While some quarters criticized Geelani for being "rude", others welcomed the statement. According to them this was the best way to ascertain the representative character of the people of Kashmir.

New Delhi has been asking the Kashmiri leadership to prove their representative character. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman, Malik Mohammad Yasin at one point of time formed his own election commission with renowned human rights defender Tapan Bose and Sidiq Wahid as its members. However, the idea could not take off for various reasons.

The debate over representative character continued till the 2008 agitation. Geelani's statement triggered it once again. The reality of today's Kashmir may favor the separatists but then Kashmiri's are unpredictable to the hilt. After the 2008 agitation which left 60 people dead, the world was surprised to see massive participation of electorate in the assembly elections. No doubt the voters made clear that they were not giving up their Azaadi claim by casting votes but the participation attracted international attention much to the discomfort of Geelani and others. Commenting on the rush outside the polling booths, a New Delhi based journalist remarked: "Kashmiri's are God because only God can be so unpredictable."

Geelani's supporters were confident that nobody from the pro-India lobby can address a rally in Lal Chowk or anywhere else in the Valley without security. "Geelani on the other hand travels in auto rickshaws at times. In 2009 he gave police a slip several times to reach his supporters in Lal Chowk and down town area of Srinagar city", they said.

The enthusiastic supporters even amended Geelani's challenge on their own. "We will not tell them (Dr. Farooq and Omar Abdullah) to address a rally because we know they cannot do it. Instead let them walk from erstwhile Palladium cinema to erstwhile Regal cinema on any working day", they challenged.

Banned yet legal

Following the arrest of a former National Conference Legislator and a Doordarshan anchor on September 11, 2012, a Jammu based newspaper published a front page story titled "Kashmiri prostitutes lead sex trade in India". The newspaper, quoting police sources, said sex trade in India had surpassed the annual revenue of Rs. 50 billion, and Kashmiri prostitutes, both male and female, had led the prostitution business across the country for several years.

The story further says that all the big names in the prostitution business hail from Jammu Kashmir, and especially the Kashmir valley. "Fair girls from Kashmir are a craze among the elite. Many such women also command their own rackets in different parts of the country and in Jammu and Srinagar as well and their earnings go in crores."

Pertinently, Jammu Kashmir is the only State in the sub-continent where prostitution is legal. According to the Public Prostitutes Registration Rules, 1921, a prostitute can carry on her trade legally if she registers herself with the District Magistrate. She has to fill in a simple application form, file it in person and pay Rs. 5 as fee, and the minimum money which she can charge is Rs. 15.

The Government admits that the rules are still in force and could be invoked. Sanctioned by the Darbar of the then Maharaja Partap Singh, vide the Chief Minister's letter no. 17197, dated February 12, 1921, these rules were first published in the Government Gazette of the same year. The rules define a public prostitute as "a woman who earns her

livelihood by offering her person to lewdness for hire." The rules also allow for the role of a brothel keeper and define him or her as "the occupier of any house, room, tent, boat, or place resorted to by person of both sexes for the purpose of committing sexual immorality." However, the brothel keeper has to ensure that he does not keep prostitutes who are not registered with the Government. Though the State tries its sex offenders under the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA) and the sections of its own Ranbir Penal Code, the rules of 1921 have not been repealed. The rules are still published in Jammu Kashmir Laws, the State's statute book. While the legislators hailing from the Kashmir valley owe an explanation to the people of Kashmir for their shameful silence over the rules that legalize prostitution in the abode of saints, the people showed their prudence by fighting prostitution twice in the past seven decades. The story carried by the Jammu newspaper is incomplete in the sense that it makes no mention of the fight against prostitution. These campaigns make Kashmir unique for being the only place in the region to resent the flesh trade. During Dogra rule, a barber from Maisuma, Muhammad Subhan Hajam fought it single handedly and succeeded in getting it banned. Elderly people say, Subhan would appear with a *dholak* (drum) and amid chanting of slogans (which he himself carved out) would urge people to refrain from going to prostitution centers. This activity was strongly detested by the police, the government and the goons who enjoyed the patronage of the prostitutes and the influential people involved in the trade. He was manhandled several times by the goons but the mission continued unabated.

The bold barber tried his best to muster support for his campaign against prostitution and succeeded to a large extent. He took care to involve people from all schools of thought. He persuaded seven hundred people who included a good

number of Pandits and Sikhs to submit a memorandum seeking ban on prostitution to the then District Magistrate, Srinagar. The memorandum had a great impact on the government.

The campaign continued for several years. The State was reluctant to ban the detested trade as 25% of its income came from prostitution. He had to face number of problems but he was too determined to give up his mission. And, finally one day, prostitution was banned in Srinagar. Subhan thanked the then District Magistrate for eradicating prostitution from Srinagar.

The second campaign was launched by Dukhtaraan-e-Millat Chief, Aasiya Andrabi seven years ago. She founded the Forum Against Social Evils (FASE) and fought promiscuity, waywardness and prostitution. Many of her colleagues were jailed for the noble job.

Apart from these organized campaigns, the people rose against the vice on their own following expose of the Sabina scandal. The people registered protest, took out processions and demanded stern action against the people involved in the racket. The High Court took cognizance and published a list of persons involved in the detested practice. The list identifies some of the top bureaucrats of the State as well. The State failed to take action against them for obvious reasons.

The legislators from Kashmir must rise above party considerations to get the rules repealed.

And the struggle continues

list of 2010 martyrs

Inayat Khan	Tariq Ahmad Dar
Manzoor Ahmad Bhat	Showkat Ahmad Chopan
Manzoor Ahmad Sofi	Muhammad Ahsan Ganie
Mushtaq Ahmad Mir	Adil Ramzan Sheikh
Wamiq Farooq Wani	Nazir Ahmad Mir
Zahid Farooq Sheikh	Javaid Ahmad Teli
Tanveer Ahmad	Mudasir Ahmad Lone
Zubair Ahmad Bhat	Nayeem Ahmad Shah
Habibullah Khan	Rayees Ahmad Wani
Ghulam Muhammad Kalas	Afroza Teli
Shezhad Ahmed	Basharat Ahmad Reshi
Reyaz Ahmed	Irshaad Ahmad Bhat
Muhammad Shafi	Ashiq Hussain Bhat
Ghulam Mohammad Kumar	Rameez Ahmad Bhat
Tufail Mattoo	Hafiz Muhammad Yaqoob
Javaid Ahmad Malla	Tariq Ahmad Dar
Aziz Malik	Khursheed Ahmad War
Mazloom Malik	Sameer Ahmad Rah
Shakeel Ahmad Ganai	Meraj-ud-Din Lone
Firdous Ahmad Kakroo	Anis Ahmad Ganai
Bilal Ahmad Wani	Suhail Ahmad Dar
Tajamul Bashir Bhat	Jahangir Ahmad Bhat
Asif Ahmad Rather	Reyaz Ahmad Bhat
Ishtiyag Ahmed Khanday	Muhammad Yaqoob Bhat
Imtiyaz Ahmad Itoo	Muhammad Iqbal Khan
Shujat-ul-Islam	Shabir Ahmad Malik
Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat	Ghulam Nabi Badyari
Fayaz Ahmad Wani	Rameez Ahmad Reshi
Yasmeen Jan (Fancy)	Aisha Sheikh
Abrar Ahmad	Fida Nabi Lone
Fayaz Ahmad Khanday	Mudasir Ahmad Zargar
	Ali Mohammad Khanday

Arif Mir
 Sameer Lone
 Irshad Ahmad Latoo
 Umar Ahmad Dar
 Muhammad Abbas Dhobi
 Milad Ahmad Dar
 Nazir Ahmad
 Mudasir Hajam
 Bilal Ahmad Sheikh
 Umar Qayoom
 Irshad Ahmad Parray
 Feroz Ahmad Malik
 Noor-ud-Din Tantray
 Mohd. Ramzan Mir
 Mudasir Ahmad Mir
 Mohammad Ashraf Mir
 Manzoor Ahmad Paswal
 Gh. Muhammad Guroo
 Danish Nabi
 Javaid Ahmad
 Nissar Ahmad Kuchay
 Adil Gaffar Teli
 Ghulam Rasool Tantray
 Rafiq
 Showkat Ahmad Mir
 Riyaz Ahmad Sheikh
 Ajaz Ahmad Wagay
 Javaid Ahmad Rather
 Aqib Ahmad Wagay
 Mudasir Ahmad Parrey
 Tariq Ahmad
 Qayoom Ahmad Wani

Iqbal Ahmad Malik
 Nissar Ahmad Bhat
 Muhammad Rafiq Teli
 Abdul Qayoom
 Shamim Ahmed
 Arshad Khan Alamdar Shah
 Baghdad Hussain
 Mudasir Ahmad Kanna
 Yasir Rafiq Sheikh
 Fayaz Ahmad Dar
 Ghulam Rasool Bhat
 Imtiyaz Ahmad Malla
 Ansar-ul-Haq Tantray
 Ali Mohammad Waza
 Rashid Ahmad Ganai
 Fayaz Ahmad Naikoo
 Noor-Ul-Amin Dagga
 Mubeena Akhter
 Muhammad Amin Ganai
 Shabir Ahmad Dar
 Bilal Ahmad Najar
 Muhammad Shaban Lone
 Sajad Ahmad Pandit
 Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Bhat
 Umar Suliman Sheikh
 Ghulam Ahmad Mir
 Mukhtar Ahmed Sheikh
 Arif Ahmad Bhat
 Peerzada Arshad
 Waseem Raja Guroo
 Zahoor Ahmad Hajam
 Zahoor Ahmad Dar

list of chittisinghpura victims

Rajinder Singh, 42
Karnail Singh, 35
Rajan Singh, 40
Niranjan Singh, 50
Gurdip Singh, 25
Ajitpal Singh, 22
Joginder Singh, 26
Gurbax Singh, 35
Uttan Singh, 30
Surjit Singh, 22
Manjit Singh, 30
Davinder Singh, 18
Rajinder Singh, 35
Rashpal Singh, 40
Gurmeek Singh, 35
Sukha Singh, 53
Ravi Singh, 38
Jang Bahadur Singh, 36
Rajdeep Singh, 18
Naseeb Singh, 50
Kulbir Singh, 25
Darbari Singh, 28
Deedar Singh, 50
Gurmit Singh, 22
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Charan Singh, 50
Sartaj Singh, 30

Rajnath Singh, 45
Faqir Singh, 65
Karnail Singh, 45
Sheetal Singh, 30
Ravinder Singh, 22
Jagdish Singh, 25
Jagir Singh, 60
Sartaj Singh, 26

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Kuhkakash	Chowdhury Ghulam Abbas
Aatish-e-Chinar	Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah
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JK Constituent Assembly
Official Report, Part 1

(195-1955)

The Meadow

Adrian levy and Cathy Scott-Clark

Kashmir Freedom Thoughts
Struggle and Tyranny

Ram Rattan Chatterjee

Jala-e-Wattan

Khaliq Parvez
Mir Sons Publications



Zahir-ud-Din was born at Magarmal Bagh, Srinagar. He had his initial schooling from DAY Higher Secondary School Magarmal Bagh/Jawahar Nagar. A science graduate from Government College Bemina, he pursued a degree in laws

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He worked as Executive editor of Greater Kashmir and as Editor Daily Etalaat. Presently he writes for various newspapers.

Cover Photograph & Design by Tayzeem Rasool

Kashmiris succeeded, India failed. The hanging marks a shift in the policy of the Indian state and Indian nation viz-a-viz Kashmir. While the state went ahead with the execution notwithstanding the 2010 agitation; very few people used words like "growing alienation" and "winning hearts" of Kashmiris in their write ups.

Is there a realization that Kashmir has changed and nobody is available to be won over by India? If this is the case, the Kashmiris have scored yet another victory. The message from Kashmir is loud and clear: **"Go India Go Back."** The execution has buried all hopes for India in Kashmir (if there were any).

About an hour before he was hanged, Afzal wrote to his family, asking them to be bold and proud of the stature he would attain by his execution. Today, not only his family but the entire Kashmiri nation is proud of his stature. He will remain a source of inspiration for valiant and defiant people of Kashmir.

Chronology of events

December 13, 2001: Five terrorists enter Parliament complex and open indiscriminate fire, killing nine people and injuring over 15.

December 15, 2001: Delhi Police pick up Afzal Guru from Jammu and Kashmir. S.A.R Geelani of Delhi University's Zakir Hussain College picked up for questioning and later arrested. Two others — Afsan Guru and her husband Shaukat Hussain Guru — were picked up later.

December 29, 2001: Afzal Guru sent to 10-day police remand.

June 4, 2002: Charges are framed against four people — Afzal Guru, Shaukat Hussain Guru, Afsan Guru and Geelani.

December 18, 2002: Death sentence given to Geelani, Shaukat